VEDANTIC EPISTEMOLOGY

G. R. MALKANI



VEDANTIC EPISTEMOLOGY

BY

GHANSHAMDAS RATTANMAL MALKANI

(*Director—Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner*)

Published by

THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY

AMALNER

G. S. PRESS, MADRAS

PREFACE

The subject of this book is somewhat new. So far as Sanskrit literature on Vedanta is concerned, it is all metaphysics. No distinction is made between metaphysics and epistemology, or between metaphysics and philosophy of religion. The goal of Vedantic metaphysics is essentially religious. It is freedom from empirical existence now and for ever. Empirical existence is a bondage for the spirit. It is the source of all evil. There is no good in it. The so-called good is really a form of evil; for it charms the human spirit, and binds it to the earth and its attractions. Only disillusionment awaits those who fall a prey to these attractions in their various seductive forms, social, economic and cultural. Nothing can satisfy the spirit of man except life eternal and ever-lasting happiness.

To achieve this goal, man wants to be free from every kind of bondage. Nothing is greater than freedom. If there is any good in life, it is not positive good. It is not the actual achievement that has ultimate value. The actual achievement can only be a stepping-stone to a greater achievement. No mere achievement can hold the human spirit permanently. We must renounce every achievement, —cast it off as of little value. If we do not renounce it, it is sure to become a trap or a prison-

house for the soul. *The only good in life is the negative good, the impulse towards freedom.* It is this impulse that carries us forward, makes life meaningful, and becomes itself the bearer of all value. What we all need is freedom, and still more freedom, till the very conception of freedom itself is transcended as something relative. Freedom is meaningful for a spirit that is in bondage. It is not meaningful for a spirit that is *really* free. Thus the highest value is freedom from freedom itself. Such is the transcendent goal of Vedantic metaphysics. "There is no Guru, and there is no disciple; there is no seeker, and none who is accomplished; there is no bondage, and there is no freedom."

How is this transcendent freedom to be achieved? It is achieved through renunciation and through negation. We must renounce all false associations and touches that plague our life, and that bind the pure and the free spirit to the body, and through the body to earthly life. But renunciation and negation are not enough. They may still engender in us a false sense of separation, which can only mean a subtler form of bondage and a subtler form of attachment to the finite and limited ego. To be truly free, our renunciation, complete in itself, must be crowned with *knowledge of our true nature,*—the Spirit or the *ātman* that is ever free, ever pure, limitless, infinite, great beyond all measure, the very image of unlimited joy, peace and freedom, etc. It is, in the end, freedom through knowledge (*jñānāt-eva-tû-kaivalyam*).

Truth alone shall make us free. Knowledge of the Truth is thus the way, and in a sense the highest value of life.

I have tried in the following chapters to clear a way for the knowledge of the truth. I have tried, as far as possible, to separate the problem of knowledge from other Vedantic problems, so that persons trained in the European tradition are not distracted by long discussions on subjects which might appear to them irrelevant or unimportant. They can proceed straight to the epistemological goal of knowledge of the truth; for that is all that Vedanta seeks to impart, and that is all that has intrinsic philosophical value.

It will be noted by those who "know", that my exposition of the subject is not tied to any particular scripture or scriptural commentary in original Sanskrit literature. It is a free and independent rendering, which keeps the spirit of Vedanta in tact, and at the same time adapts the expression to the understanding of those who are inbued with the spirit of Western thought, and who are in the habit of thinking on the compartmental lines of European philosophy. The substance is oriental, but the form is very much occidental. It has always been my desire to modernise the form of Vedantic philosophy, so that it can appeal to a wider public, who are incapable of recapturing the logical formalities and subtleties of oriental thinking. I claim no originality for this. I merely seek to speak the

language which I myself understand, and which the modern man can understand readily.

A special feature of my exposition is the setting up of levels of knowledge. The literature of orthodoxy does not appear to contain any clear hint of this. It goes straight to the exposition of the ultimate object of knowledge or knowledge of Brahman. That is the only knowledge worth possessing, and it shows the way and discusses the means. It does not suggest, as far as I know, any gradations in knowledge, so that we can rise from the level of common-sense and of science to the highest form of knowledge, called *Brahma-vidya* or knowledge of the truth. The only suggestion of this is contained in the notion of *Koshās* or sheaths of the soul. But that is a somewhat different concept. I have adopted in my exposition the conception of grades, or of gradual approximation to the truth. This may appear somewhat strange to an orthodox Vedantist. For him, the line between truth and falsehood is clear and definite, and admits of no prevarication. On one side is Absolute Truth, and on the other is pure error. Without subscribing to the doctrine of degrees of truth and of error, I have thought it advisable to make the approach to truth less arduous and less upsetting of our common truth-values. I have so to say up-graded the knowledge, sugared the pill, and made error appear less erroneous, till we come to the concluding phase, where no compromise between truth and error is

possible. We rise gradually to truth, step by step, till we reach the top and are able to kick the ladder by which we got there.

Here again my originality is limited. Those who have read Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya's paper on "Concept of Philosophy" in the volume "Contemporary Indian Philosophy" will have noted the logical steps by which we can rise from lower knowledge to the knowledge of truth. This idea of gradualness or of levels of knowledge was suggested to me by that paper. But the interpretation that I have put upon it is all my own; and I am not at all sure that Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya would have accepted it in toto. I shall indeed be happy if some-one comes forward and says that I have, in the last four chapters, merely filled up the details of a basic plan laid down by him. Nothing shall be more gratifying to me than that I should be a correct interpreter or commentator of that great Indian thinker. But his thinking was of a short-hand and compressed type. It was too logical and precise. I can only get at his real meaning with great effort, and sometimes not at all. I always like to have the truth in a less abstract and simpler form, so that it can appeal to the imagination. Prof. Bhattacharyya was therefore for me an ideal of a different kind. He suggested new lines of thought, and the abstract logic of a view. Thus he left much to the imagination of others, who had to clothe his logic with the flesh and blood of imagery.

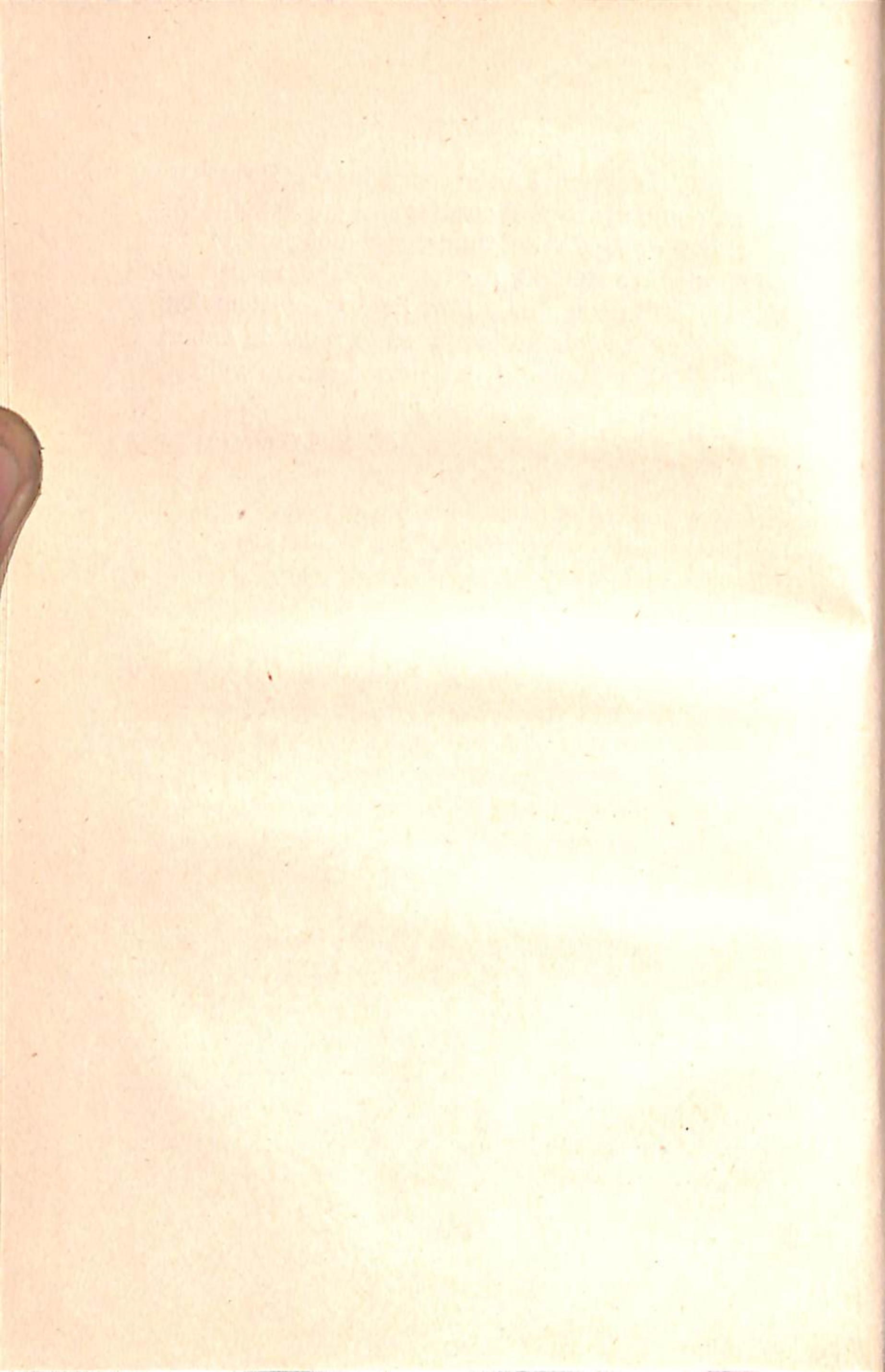
I believe that Prof. Bhattacharyya was a real Vedantist. But his logic was always an obstacle for lesser minds, who desire a simple and non-technical presentation of truth, that can speak to the heart no less than to the head. I respect the logician in him; and I have tried to follow in his foot-steps to the best of my ability, leaving it to others to judge whether I have truly interpreted him, or distorted him, or struck an independent line. For myself I believe that I have learned from him what I could, and then woven it in the fabric of my thought. It has always been my practice to read an author, then forget what he has written, and then rethink the same problems for myself. The same is true in this case. In particular, I may mention here that there is no clear indication, in the paper referred to, of what Prof. Bhattacharyya meant to convey by the most important level of knowledge, namely the knowledge of truth. I have no misgivings on that point myself; and so I have put forward what I consider to be the Vedantic point of view on the subject, which I accept.

I was occupied with the subject of this book off and on for nearly two years, during which I delivered some lectures on it in the Indian Institute of Philosophy. Originally, it was meant to be a comparative study. Later on however it was found more feasible to leave out all those portions which gave a more or less detailed account of European thought, and to concentrate on Vedantic thought,

with only occasional references to the former by way of comparison and contrast. I am hopeful that the spirit of Vedantic thought is not lost by my unorthodox presentation of it. If the reader can get only a dim idea of a new field of epistemological thinking, that is not confined to sensible experience, my efforts should not have been in vain.

Amalner,
15-5-53.

G. R. Malkani



CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION

Vedantic epistemology, like any other epistemological system, is based upon common experience. It has no reference to any uncommon or mystic experience. The problems it tackles are problems that arise through reflection upon this common experience. But different questions can be asked. Everything depends upon the starting-point and the general outlook with which one starts. If we take for granted, through natural bias, that physical reality is the only reality, we shall naturally raise questions, which will throw no doubt upon this reality, and which will seek to justify our knowledge of it. We shall thus get the empiricist's epistemology, although even this may be carried to a point where the physical reality with which we started melts away.

We may believe in the reality of some other world, which is not a matter of common every-day experience. We may, for instance, believe in a world where reason is omnipotent. It is a world of pure reason. We shall then ask questions which will tend to prove that the common sensible experience is not true to reality, and that there is a higher experience or a rational insight that alone can apprehend the truth. There is nothing irrational or merely given. What we take to be *given* is really posited by reason itself. Both the form

and the content of true knowledge is provided by reason. This will be the rationalist's epistemology.

We may believe not in the reality of a super-sensible world of reason, but in the reality of a super-sensible world of spirit or spirits. We shall then ask questions which will tend to show that our knowledge of the physical world, whatever it is, whether sensible or rational, is not quite true to reality, that it is phenomenal, etc. How then is the truth to be known? It may not be capable of being known in the ordinary way or with the normal apparatus of knowledge. There may be no *theoretically valid* awareness of it. In that case, the higher truth can only be realized in a mystic consciousness, which is not open to our analysis, being too uncommon or personal; or alternatively, it can only be realized through our moral consciousness in the realm of practical reason. The law of moral life is the categorical imperative, "thou ought". The implications of the law as to human freedom and the reality of God and of souls may be our only evidence of the reality of a realm of spirit.

We may start, as Vedanta does, with the sole reality of one undifferenced universal spirit called Brahman, and also the possibility of a direct intuitive awareness of this reality. We shall then ask questions, which will tend to prove that our knowledge of the physical world or of any other world can only be erroneous in character. There is only one kind of knowledge that is true; and that

knowledge is the knowledge of Brahman, the Absolute Reality. This knowledge must be *direct* and *intuitive;* since that is the only complete and convincing form of knowledge, leaving nothing to imagination or to intellectual construction. It must also be *communicable;* since that is the only genuine and non-personal form of knowledge. Lastly, there must be a *basis* for this higher knowledge in our common experience, and the means for transforming this basic truth into a complete intellectual intuition of reality. Otherwise, we could not get at the truth, in the absence of an original and ready-made intuition of reality shared by all mankind.

What is important to note is that it is the metaphysical stand-point, however arrived at, that makes a difference to our epistemological questions and our epistemological conclusions. This metaphysical standpoint is not always explicit or always argued about. But it is in the back-ground determining all our thinking. It is undoubtedly prior to our epistemological analysis and epistemological reasoning.

It is not necessary to justify Vedantic metaphysics here. We are concerned with it only in so far as it explains why we ask certain questions. Other philosophers may not ask those questions, and may not consider them important. But the only relevant point for us is whether those questions can be asked or not, and whether the analysis of experience which we give in order to resolve

those questions is erroneous at any point. By this test, Vedantic epistemology will be found to satisfy all the demands that we can make upon a rational theory of knowledge.

Vedantic epistemology seeks to establish that our knowledge of the objective world, whether physical or mental, is erroneous; that there are levels of knowledge, so that the negation of one level leads directly to the one above it; that the only true knowledge is the knowledge of a super-sensible or metaphysical reality; that this reality is not a distant or an unknowable reality, but that it is our very Self; and lastly, that the Self is *self-revealing*, and therefore the only reality that is fit to be known for what it really is.

To establish these conclusions, Vedanta draws a clear-cut line between our intuition of the self and our intuition of the not-self.

This is a great initial step. It makes all the difference to the possibility of a higher metaphysical knowledge. Our experience is amorphous. We do not know how to divide it, where to divide it, and what questions to ask. Vedanta takes a great decisive step when it distinguishes two different kinds of reality corresponding to two different kinds of intuition. It is a step pregnant with great possibilities. We are no longer concerned, in a theory of knowledge, with one kind of reality only, the external reality that is given through the senses

or in introspection. Side by side with it, there is another kind of reality, qualitatively different. Nobody can deny his own existence. Nobody can say, "I am not," and expect to be believed. At the same time, he does not refer to any entity which is comparable with "this," or which is objectively identifiable. The whole of Vedanta is merely the development of the full significance of this only non-empirical form of reality intuited by all.

No-one can deny that we have these two kinds of *intuitive perception,* the perception of *this* and the perception of *I.* This is not a mythical distinction, or an unimportant distinction. The not-self does not *gradually merge* into the self, or *vice-versa.* The objects of these two intuitions can never be confused with each other, at least consciously. If anything is *given* to us, or if anything is *this,* we put it outside the self as what can only appropriately be called the not-self. But if the distinction is clear-cut, there is also no possible *synthesis* of the two terms which can supersede the distinction. The unity of the subject and the object in experience has still an objective character; we can be said to know it. There is also no intuition of an entity called God or the Absolute that can transcend the distinction. If reality is anywhere, it is either in the Self or in the not-Self, but never in *both of them taken together as a whole* (for such unity is unavailable); nor in a *neutral entity* which is neither of the nature of the Self nor of the nature of the not-Self (for that too is unavailable). Once we

are clear about the ultimate character of the distinction, the only question that we can raise is whether both the Self and the not-Self are real in their own way and in their own place; or whether one of them is real, and the other an illusory appearance only. In the latter case, the further question arises, which is the reality and which the appearance? Is the Self an illusory appearance of the not-Self, or vice-versa?

The answer of Vedanta to all these questions is clear and emphatic. There is only *one kind of reality*, not two kinds. If there were two kinds of reality, we should still have a question on our hands, —what is the underlying stuff or the common factor of the two kinds that makes them *both real?* It is very much a question like the question, what constitutes the physicality of two things such as iron and wood? We have naturally to go beyond the apparent differences of both wood and iron in order to get at their common stuff or their common character called their physicality. It may be that both are constituted of the common stuff of electrical charges; and if this is merely paraphrasing, we shall have to reduce the differences to a common character of experience, such as "sensible given-ness" in principle. A similar question can be raised in respect of the common reality of the Self and the not-Self. What is *common* to them, by way of stuff or by way of character, in view of which both the Self and the not-Self can be declared *real?* It cannot be their *given-ness;* for the Self is never given. It

cannot be their *objectivity*, which is generally associated with reality. What then is common? If nothing is common between what is empirical and what is non-empirical or transcendental, a decision has got to be made. Since nothing can be real *outside the terms*, and since nothing can be *common between them*, one of them must be the reality and the other an illusory appearance of the same. The decision of Vedanta is given in no uncertain terms. The Self is the reality, and the not-Self in all its forms is the appearance.

In order to justify this conclusion, all sorts of questions and doubts will have to be resolved, as they arise. They will be considered in their proper place. But it may be of some importance to note here the salient features of the general argument. (a) A realistic theory of perception will be clearly inappropriate. If we could prove that the data of sense, or some other kind of reality behind those data and commonly called physical objects, can exist *in themselves* and independently of all knowledge of them, Vedantic metaphysics would be clearly false; the Self cannot be the only reality or the only thing truly known. An idealistic theory of perception *in some sense* is thus clearly indicated.

(b) An idealistic theory of perception can only be logically based upon the fact of erroneous perception. Once the fact of erroneous perception is granted, there is nothing to save the veracity of perception as such. For there is no *valid theoreti-*

cal consideration to distinguish true perception from false. What distinguishes the two is convenience of life and practical considerations. If it is conceded that *any* perception whatsoever is open to correction and cancellation, the whole case for veridical perception is given up. Vedanta summarises this argument in the dictum: "the visible or the sensible is for that reason alone illusory (*driṣatvāt mithyā*)." The same view is put differently by saying that truth must not be open to cancellation in the three times,—past, present and future (*trikālābādhita*).

(c) *The only uncancellable truth* is the truth of the Self; for it is self-evidently true. The Self reveals itself for what it is to our thought, not the reverse. The world is revealed *by* our mind, while the Self reveals Itself *to* our mind. In other words, the reality of the Self determines our knowledge of that reality. This knowledge is thus said to be *vastû-tantra* or dependent upon the *thing-itself*. All true knowledge has this character.

This is the general direction of the argument of Vedantic epistemology. It is supplemented by a detailed analysis of the different forms of our knowledge, and their progressive approximation to the truth. Truth is in the end knowledge of the Self; or better still, knowledge of the identity of the Self and Brahman. There is nothing farther than this in the realm of truth, nothing that is truer. It is the only desideratum of philosophical knowledge.

CHAPTER I

Importance of Epistemology

A theory of knowledge has always followed metaphysics and formed part of it. In fact, a metaphysical system is incomplete without a theory of knowledge. But the emphasis on the latter has varied. Rationalist philosophers before Kant were mainly occupied with metaphysics, and paid little or no attention to epistemology. They had a metaphysic, but it was dogmatic. It was not strictly based on reason, although the philosophers in question made much of reason. At the opposite extreme were the empiricists, who put more emphasis upon the analysis of knowledge. They tried to show what we really could know or did know. But then their metaphysics was negligible. They arrived at negative metaphysical conclusions: there was no metaphysical reality, and no knowledge of such reality. Kant tried to make good the one-sidedness of each of these two points of view, and to combine a legitimate theory of knowledge with a legitimate metaphysic, based strictly on reason.

Kant, it appeared, gave a new turn to philosophical thinking. He put epistemology in the foreground. In common with the empiricists, he put more emphasis upon experience and upon what we could really know. Reason had no independent

source of knowledge. It was tied to experience, and experience was essentially sensible. We could not therefore rationally know what was not given in experience. Any kind of metaphysical reality was not given in experience, and we could not literally know it. He was however able to provide for the reality of metaphysical entities on non-theoretical grounds or grounds of practical reason.

Kant thought that he had scored a great and permanent success by replacing rationalistic metaphysics by a critical analysis of the powers of reason itself. In actual fact, he moved from one form of dogmatism to another, from the rationalist's dogmatism to the empiricist's dogmatism. Before we analyse knowledge, we must take the fact of knowledge for granted. Kant took over this fact, with only a slight modification, from popular belief. Scientific knowledge was admitted to be the only accepted form of knowledge. But does not this predetermine the whole issue of the possible scope of knowledge? Is it all the knowledge that we possess? Is there no basis in our experience for a higher or a super-sensible intuition of reality? Those who deny the very possibility of such an intuition in the name of reason are really dogmatists in disguise. The following chapters constitute an attempt to get beyond the dogmatism of Kant, to analyse experience in a wider and more comprehensive sense, and to bring out the full significance of the higher and the more subtle forms of perception of reality already present in it.

Kant proceeded on a dogmatic restriction of his data or facts of experience. What he gives us is not a theory of *knowledge as such* or of true knowledge, but a theory of scientific knowledge. Such a theory evidently cannot decide for us, except by a dogmatic twist, the possibility or otherwise of any other kind of knowledge; and if its conclusions are illegitimately universalised, it may even rule out such possibility. This much however can be said in its favour that sensible experience has a universality claimed by no other form of cognitive experience. The least we can do is to justify this at least as knowledge, and ward off the attacks of scepticism against it. This is the minimum that a rationalist can do, and Kant tried to achieve that end.

Kant's effort was praiseworthy, and it had far-reaching metaphysical implications. If something at least was known, something was really real,—the thing-in-itself. The postulate of the thing-in-itself was fundamental to Kant's philosophy. It distinguished him from all mere empiricists and idealists. It provided a metaphysical basis for any possible philosophy. At the same time, it was an example of a standing contradiction in his thought. Reality could only be known in experience; and yet here was reality, the thing-in-itself, that transcended our experience and was literally unknowable. That at once posed a problem. What became of our scientific knowledge itself? Was it real knowledge? Did it fulfil the idea of knowledge? If it did not, if it did not reveal an already existing thing as it is

in-itself, subjectivism and idealism had complete sway over our scientific knowledge. There must be some other kind of knowledge, of a higher kind, which alone could fulfil the idea of knowledge. It was this negative service that Kant did to philosophy. A metaphysical reality was indicated by him, but knowledge of it was denied. It was a direct challenge to reason. His half-hearted solution, which he sought in Practical Reason, was no solution. Practical Reason could not solve the problems of Theoretical Reason or Pure Reason. There is a demand for a theoretical solution of a theoretical problem, which Kant could not meet on his restricted assumptions and limited metaphysical outlook.

Some philosophers, disappointed with his negative metaphysical conclusions, think that Kant was unduly occupied with a theory of knowledge. According to them, we should take our knowledge for granted. What is the use of asking, "how we know?", when we cannot get behind knowledge and still know. We cannot reconstitute knowledge out of elements supposed to be prior to it. Any such dissection of knowledge is artificial. Let us therefore admit that somehow we know. On the basis of this knowledge, we can raise questions about reality. Metaphysics should take precedence over epistemology. The latter adds nothing to our knowledge. It cannot evolve a new kind of knowledge, or solve our fundamental metaphysical problems. It can only create unnecessary difficulties in our

understanding of the knowledge which we already have.

We cannot quite agree with this view. Metaphysics is important. More than that. A theory of knowledge is not even possible without metaphysics. We do not know how we are to analyse our knowledge, if we do not make any metaphysical presuppositions. All epistemology has a metaphysical background. We start from this, and come back to it. We only reach conclusions in our theory of knowledge which will be in consonance with our metaphysics. In this sense, Kant was wrong in thinking that an epistemological enquiry could be pursued independently and dispassionately, without metaphysical presuppositions, and that a valid metaphysic could then be built on the results of such an enquiry. In fact, the whole of Kant's metaphysical stand-point is involved in his analysis of knowledge. There is simply no need of a separate metaphysic which should follow his epistemological enquiry.

At the same time, epistemology cannot be divorced from metaphysics, and is an essential part of it. There is only one way in which we can decide the nature of reality; and that is through actual knowledge. What do we really know? To decide what we really know, we must reflect on knowledge at the common-sense level. We must reject everything in it which is due to subjective interference, euphemistically called subjective interpretation. What is left may be said to be really known.

For nothing here mediates our knowledge of reality. Reality and our intuition of it meet at a point, so to say; and truth becomes indistinguishable from reality. We have not to seek for reality outside our actual knowledge, in the realm of the unknown and the unknowable, or in some mystic experience not available to the common man. That would not be philosophy. We must seek for complete and absolute reality in the experience of the common man. Only we must divest this experience of every element of subjective interpretation, which is, in the very nature of the case, mis-interpretation. We must thus seek, in common human experience, a first-hand revelation of reality, that is direct and intuitive. No mediacy will be here; no judgment; no possibility of error. It will be pure unmixed truth revealed in human experience. All metaphysical doubts and questions will then have their quietus. The epistemological undertaking will have fructified into a complete metaphysical truth.

The epistemological undertaking, as envisaged by us, has something to distinguish it from Kant's notion of the same. We must indeed criticise knowledge as we find it. But criticism does not mean that we must dissect knowledge, reconstruct it out of more primitive elements, or give the genetic process of knowledge. All this will be mere imagination. It will give rise to endless new difficulties. Like all speculative philosophy, it will not be *criticism* but *construction*. We do not propose

therefore to give a *theory* of knowledge, or a theory of how knowledge arises. To give such a theory, we must be able to get behind knowledge and to reconstruct knowledge, which is an impossible undertaking. We therefore take knowledge as we find it, and do not seek to get behind it. We remain within knowledge. We then analyse it, criticise it, question it. It is a process of understanding knowledge from within, so that we are able to separate the chaff from the grain, or the truth in knowledge from the falsehood in it. It is the process of seeking ultimate truth in the common-place, through criticism and through reflection, not through speculation or imagination. Kant's epistemology was not *pure criticism.* It had much in common with all speculative philosophy.

It must be noted here that criticism of knowledge is incomplete, if it does not lead, step by step, to a higher knowledge that is free from criticism. No piece of knowledge can be wholly and absolutely false. Only pure imagination is that; and pure imagination is not a species of knowledge. In actual knowledge, imagination is mixed up with a core of undeniable truth. It is the business of criticism to separate the two, bring out the core of truth, and make its significance more and more manifest. Generally speaking, we shall find that criticism of knowledge at any particular level suggests a higher level of knowledge, already immanent in it, which is free from that particular criti-

cism. The process must go on, till all criticism is made innocuous and unnecessary, and truth shines as self-evidently true, and so the very apex of all lower forms of knowledge. This is the true *Brahma-vidya.*

The problem of knowledge, thus understood, is the problem of Ultimate Reality itself. Epistemology becomes the very centre of the metaphysical quest. It is not an unimportant addendum of metaphysics, but in a sense its core.

CHAPTER II

Perception

European epistemology is based almost entirely upon an analysis of sense-experience. That is not so in Vedanta. Other forms of experience are also admitted as essentially cognitive. The experience of states like dreaming, wakefulness and sleep is one of them. There is also an intuition of the self in a sense which is never admitted by European philosophers. These experiences are most significant, and their proper analysis is essential for an adequate epistemology.

We shall naturally start however with an analysis of the most commonly-accepted form of cognitive experience, namely perception. European philosophers accept perception as a valid source of knowledge, and offer a theory which will validate our knowledge of the physical world. According to them, what we know empirically is true in some sense: (a) What we know may be an ideal representation. But this representation is never-the-less true to the world. How this truth is ascertained is a different question, which no philosopher has succeeded in answering satisfactorily. We certainly cannot jump out of the world of our representations to the real world, and compare the two.

(b) What we know is not an ideal representation, but reality itself. Our knowledge refers to

reality and has reality for its true object. When therefore there is no known subjective distortion or error, our knowledge grasps reality as it is. This is perhaps the most popular version of the correspondence theory of knowledge. It accords well with common-sense. It also avoids the difficulty of establishing correspondence between two separate worlds,—a reality outside and a mental image or representation within. But it is a sort of make-believe only. We *believe* in the truth of our knowledge. There is no *evidence* for it. What evidence there is, is just to the contrary. Our knowledge may be *referring to* reality. But what is the evidence of its *truth?* What is the evidence that our knowledge does not interfere with reality or misrepresent reality? After all, error is always possible. If error is due to subjective interference or misrepresentation, we must have an indubitable criterion within knowledge itself to detect the fact and the extent of error; otherwise the whole knowledge is condemned. We shall take error for truth, and *vice versa*. On the other hand, if the criterion in question is available, how shall we ever fall in error? The error will be detected the moment it occurs. But if we are conscious of error, how shall we be ever *under* it or *in* it? Unless our knowledge of the physical world is self-evidently true, we have no reliable criterion of truth and falsehood. Truth is error, and error is truth.

(c) What we know is not the reality itself, but an appearance of it. This appearance is subjective

in character, but it is not a mere fabrication of our imagination. It has its roots in reality and refers to reality. To know it therefore is to know at the same time that there is reality behind it, which we do not know in the same sense. The appearance is in some mysterious, but never-the-less undeniable, way determined by reality. It is reality that appears. The appearance is accordingly lifted to a level higher than that of a pure imagination. It has *phenomenal reality.* This view avoids the difficulties of view (b). All knowledge of the physical world is self-consciously subjective. The question of its literal truth therefore simply does not arise. There can be no correspondence between our knowledge and the reality as it is in itself. The latter we do not know, and also cannot know. Truth is a category which applies within our knowledge only. It does not apply to knowledge in its relation to reality, or to knowledge in-so-far as it is supposed to represent to us reality as it is in itself. But then can we be satisfied with this lop-sided notion of truth? The reference to reality is there, but not the knowledge of this reality. It is a challenge to reason. If knowledge contains a self-reference to reality and is *of reality* in some sense, how can this reference to what is *beyond* be bereft of actual knowledge of the latter? It is a proposition only to be stated in order to be rejected. Taken literally, the whole conception of knowledge undergoes an uncalled-for, and wholly unacceptable, transformation. Instead of revealing

reality to us, it constructs an image or a representation of reality which has nothing in common with reality, and which is in that sense wholly subjective and false. We make no amends for this loss of the fundamental meaning of knowledge by admitting that reason makes a contribution to it. Reason must not construct or make reality, but follow the self-revelation of reality or its revelation through other means. Phenomenal reality is no reality at all.

(d) Finally, there is the purely idealistic theory of knowledge which carries view (c) to its logical conclusion. According to it, there is no reality outside of us and transcendent to us. There is no physical reality so to say, and no reality that is independent of all knowledge. Reality is rational, or reality is sentience; so that knowledge is fundamental to reality. Only this knowledge may have more or less of truth, according as it is more or less free from self-contradiction. The criterion of truth lies within knowledge itself; it is self-consistency or coherence. There is no reality that is transcendent to knowledge or independent of knowledge to which knowledge may be said to conform. But then is not reality reduced to some ideal content, however coherent that content may be? A coherent dream is still a dream. We certainly distinguish reality from an idea, however rich in meaning. Ideas can never do justice to reality. Reality will always go beyond them. Ideas are ours. They are partial and abstract. Reality is not ours. It is in

itself. It is always more than the ideas; and this *more* can never be defined in terms of the ideas. Ideas are referred to reality. They do not constitute reality themselves. Reality is the *great beyond* which we are always seeking, and never finding within the limits of our thinking. It is also evident that the very concept of knowledge demands that reality must be independent of the knowledge of it; so that it may be known or may not be known; but in any case, it *need not* be known. If it must necessarily be known, or if it cannot exist except as known, knowledge will be constitutive of it. But knowledge is not imagination. It is imagination that constructs its objects, not knowledge. The evolution of Western epistemology has thus ended in denying reality itself, and setting up reason and its ideas in its place.

Whatever the differences between the various epistemological theories of Western philosophers, whether realistic or idealistic, one thing is common to them all. They all seek to justify sensible experience, and give a theory of truth based principally upon that experience. There is no theory which denies the truth of all sensible experience in its totality, and puts in its place a higher form of experience which is truth par excellence. Even Bradley's *Absolute Experience,* which supersedes all sensible experience, and which is above the level of discursive thought, harbours within itself all those appearances which have their roots in, and are derived from, sensible experience. The appear-

ances are the very stuff of the higher experience. This whole tendency to justify sensible experience in some form or other is completely reversed in Vedanta. We have here a theory which seeks to prove that sensible experience is a form of error, and that all its objects are illusory objects. When therefore we are perceiving any part or aspect of the physical world, we are not knowing reality, we are distorting it. All perception is misperception. What is not sensible is apprehended by us as sensible, what is not physical is apprehended by us as physical, etc. That is the great error. *Reality is completely and wholly opposed in nature to what we perceive it to be.* In this sense, it is not enough to say that there is metaphysical reality as well as the physical. It is truer to say that there is metaphysical reality only, *there is no other.* Knowledge of this reality is the desideratum. A valid epistemology must point the way to it.

Perception may be a species of erroneous knowledge. But we must be able to *see* the error of it. We cannot see the error of it, if it is *wholly erroneous.* A wholly erroneous form of experience cannot even simulate the appearance of knowledge. It will be just imagination. Imagination cannot mislead us. When we imagine, we are conscious that the image is just as we imagine it. The image is thus wholly unreal, and we are aware of it. That is not so in erroneous knowledge. We are misled by it. We are misled, because it has the appearance of knowledge; and it has the appearance of know-

ledge, because truth is mixed with falsehood in it. All that we can do is to separate the two. We shall then not only realise the error of the experience as a whole, but also rise through error to a higher level of truth. Negate the error. That is the only way to get at the truth. This mixture of truth and error in the same experience is a very different thing from saying that the experience in question is partially true or that there are degrees of truth and falsehood. Truth and falsehood are qualitatively different, and absolutely opposed to each other. The transition from error to truth is like the transition from darkness to light.

According to the upanishads,—the world is begun in speech. It is in giving names that there is a world at all (*Vāchārambhaṇo Vikāro nāmadheyam*). In other words, the reality of the world consists merely in speech-forms or in a way of speaking. We give different names to the same underlying reality or stuff, and call it the world. In truth, the world is only in name. The underlying thing is the only reality, and there is no name for it. It is truly un-name-able and indescribable. It is this reality that requires to be known. It is more than an idea, more than a sense-datum, more than a speech-form. All these are subjective. Reality is not subjective, but *in itself*. It is essentially super-sensible and spiritual.

Such a conclusion may appear at the outset very arbitrary, far-fetched and unreal. The world is very real for us, if it is not the only reality; and

this reality is known in perception, which, with all its distortions, still testifies to the reality of things outside which in some way determine our perception of them. If there were nothing outside, nothing could be perceived or taken as given. Perception is a form of cognition; and cognition has a necessary reference to a reality that is independent of us and given to us. The reality of the world is thus undoubted, although we may have certain doubts as to its true form or nature.

We may here say at once that Vedanta does not deny any fact of experience. What it denies is a certain analysis of the fact. We may have no question about the fact and its significance to us. In that case, we are not called upon to analyse it. We take it at its face-value. It means to us what it means to every-body. There is no room for our disagreeing with others. This is really the level of common-sense, where we all unconsciously interpret experience in a certain way, and entertain identical beliefs. Common-sense accordingly has no need for philosophising. To speak of common-sense philosophy is therefore a misnomer. The need for philosophising only arises when we reflect upon common-sense beliefs, and become conscious of certain contradictions in them. To remove these contradictions, we have to analyse and interpret our experience. This is all that we are philosophically called upon to do. We are not called upon to go outside our experience and undertake a voyage of discovery in the so-called realm of *specu-*

lative thinking, but rather to keep strictly to experience and interpret it from within. We have to apply a probe to experience, in order to discover its hidden meaning. This process of *reflective thinking* naturally takes us beyond common-sense, and makes common-sense appear topsy-turvy and devoid of sense. It is therefore no valid charge against Vedanta that it is opposed to common-sense. That we have in a way accepted as the inevitable consequence of all genuine philosophising. The only legitimate question is whether the analysis removes the contradiction that gave rise to the question of "meaning of experience" or whether it does not.

Let us now take perception. It is claimed to be a valid source of kowledge of a world outside. But wherein does this validity consist? It will naturally be said that perception is of the *given.* This may be interpreted to mean that there is *objective compulsion* and absence of subjective freedom in perception. We do not *choose* to perceive anything, we are always *made* to perceive it. The compulsion is exercised by the object itself. But what sort of compulsion is this? Evidently it is not a volitional sort of compulsion in which some-one is compelled to do something against his will. It is a factual sort of compulsion. It is a fact that we so perceive. But this fact is not simple. It has no reference to the object only, but also to the subjective factor of *our perceiving* it. Both object and subject figure in a perception, and make

their respective contributions. It is no longer therefore quite so simple to decide what is the exact contribution of the object, and how far it has *determined* the perception of it. In this state of uncertainty, what meaning are we going to attach to "objective compulsion"? Unless we are able to dissociate the respective contributions of the subject and of the object, which is by the very nature of the case impossible, we cannot say whether, and how far, the object has compelled us to perceive it as we actually do. We have no feeling that the object *cannot but* be so perceived, or that our perception of it is all the truth about it. We have rather the opposite feeling,—is the object *really* as we perceive it to be? We cannot be unconscious, on reflection, of subjective interference, leading sometimes to error, and always to doubt. That seals the fate of objective compulsion. Not that reality has no compulsive effect upon knowledge. But that compulsive effect must be seen within knowledge itself; and it can only be seen, when reality is not dead, inert and unintelligent, but when it is intelligent and self-revealing to knowledge. We can then recognise it as self-evidently true and as determinant of the knowledge of it. The self-evident cannot be otherwise. It is known for what it is. It is absolutely free from any form of subjective interference. Short of the self-evident or the self-revealing, objective compulsion is meaningless. In the absence of this objective compulsion, the subject can only make for freedom. It is true that

we do not perceive what we *want to perceive.* If we could do that, that would be freedom exercised outside the sphere of knowledge altogether, and there would not even be an illusion of knowing reality. Where our freedom is unrestricted, the question of erroneous knowledge does not arise. Perception is certainly not a case of unrestricted freedom. It is a case of erroneous knowledge. There must therefore be an element of objective truth in it. We are trying to get at this element. So far however as the contribution of the subject is concerned, it does not make for truth. It makes for interference and distortion. We must negate the subjectivity of any piece of knowledge, in order to get at the truth. The freedom of the subject exercised within the sphere of knowledge throws up illusory objects. We can certainly recognise its presence in perception, where *thought gives all the form that the object possesses and thereby constructs the object as a whole.* The idea of objective compulsion thus falls to the ground.

It may now be said that it is quite wrong to suppose that there is any freedom of interpretation within perceptual experience. If there is any freedom, it is quite restricted. We cannot call the black "blue," and vice-versa. That may indeed be so. But it only amounts to saying that what *we perceive* as black is for that reason alone black, and what *we perceive* as blue is for that reason alone blue. It does not mean that reality is black or blue. We start from *our perception* and give a character

to reality, not vice-versa. But *our perception* is a double-edged sword. If it contains a reference to reality, it also contains a reference to the percipient subject. This subject is not passive in perception. It is quite active from the very beginning. In the most rudimentary form of knowledge called sensation, thought is already present, giving form to reality or interpreting reality. There is no simple or direct revelation of reality to begin with on which thought *later* supervenes. In other words, there is no knowledge of any *object* without thought. But if that is so, what is the basis on which thought proceeds in order to interpret reality? What are its clues? What are the objective checks for its interpretation? *Absolutely nil.* There is no such direct awareness of reality prior to thought, and purely sensible, which can provide thought with the requisite evidence. In fact, if there were any such awareness to begin with, thought would not be called upon to interpret reality. It would be quite superfluous. Nobody interprets what is evident. The evident offers no scope to thought except that of recognition. If I can know reality in the first flash of sensible intuition, where is the need for me to proceed to *judge* reality, and then to question the truth of this judgment? But if knowledge *begins with* judgment, and so with interpretation, how shall we ever know the truth of it? What are the checks upon our freedom of interpretation or of misinterpretation. There are no checks provided by reality itself, and therefore no theoretically valid checks.

Our freedom, for all theoretical purposes, is as good as unrestricted. The only limitation which we can recognise is that there *is* a reality, and this reality must have a positive nature of its own which we mis-interpret or mis-perceive. But the nature of this reality is an open question. One thing only is certain. What we put in reality or attribute to reality cannot be the *own nature* of reality; and further, whatever we know of reality, the whole ideal content of our judgments in which we describe reality, is what we have put in the mouth of reality or attributed to reality. Reality speaks to us in our own language and in terms of our own ideas. It is not reality that is speaking to us. It is we ourselves that are speaking in it, and deluding ourselves that we are listening to the voice of reality.

What the things are in themselves after all their sensible and all their ideal content is taken away is anybody's guess. We are not called upon to visualise them. For to visualise them is to reconstruct them subjectively, which will be a form of perversion. Such visualisation will also not explain anything. It will merely repeat the error of our original experience, where we took what was only a subjective construction for an objective truth. What is demanded is to negate every subjective element in our direct intuitive awareness of things, and thus strive to keep reality pure and free from every sensible and formal character which we are in the habit of attributing to it. The limit can only

be reached in a super-sensible and metaphysical substratum which is not open to an outside inspection. If it is to be known, it can only be known through other methods, or as a reality revealing itself within us. But at this stage of our analysis, we can only call it pure being without any qualities, running through all forms and varieties of being which constitute our world.

It might appear that we are making too short a cut to a preconceived notion of reality, and giving little consideration to the complexity of our experience. After all the sensible object as such cannot be altogether illusory. The senses put us in *direct contact* with reality. They do not interpret this reality. Interpretation is the work of thought. But what is thought to interpret, if it is supplied with no material by the senses? We must therefore suppose that something is really grasped by the senses, and this something is grasped without any distortion. It is, in this sense, part of reality itself. It is purely intuited. Intuition is direct awareness. There is no error in it. Error arises only in thought which *judges* reality, and in judging attributes a false character to it.

Let it be so. But what do the senses actually apprehend? To say that they apprehend a sensum is not to say much. It is a sort of a paraphrase. And then, what after all is a sensum, if we take away the *form* given to it by thought? The sensum without the form will be no object of any kind. Is it then really a knowable, and can it be said to be

really known in pure sense-awareness? We have no idea of an objectless knowledge; and if pure sense-awareness is objectless, it can provide no material whatsoever to thought to work upon. The purely sensed element in knowledge then is, to say the least, something that is by its very nature elusive. It is the indeterminate. The moment we try to fix it or determine it in thought, it has escaped us. It melts away in our hands, and yet it is not nothing. It has the illusive character of being something, and yet without any positive nature which may be known. The senses do not give us any *knowledge* of reality. They only produce an illusion of sensible being.

But do we not sensibly perceive *the given?* The given-ness of the object, and so its externality and independence, cannot be denied. That at least is not illusory. But do we really perceive the given-ness, as we perceive a colour, or a sound, etc.? The truth seems to be that given-ness is a *function of sensing.* It is not that things are first there and given, *and then* they are sensed. It is our sensing that creates the illusion of given-ness and of outsided-ness to us. No sensing, no given-ness, etc. Indeed, the relation of externality as between objects can be a matter of thought. In this sense, the world may be said to be outside my body. But the world, the body, and all the objects that can be external to each other, are sensibly given to me. This given-ness is a function of our sensing, not of

thought as such, for which nothing can be literally given. It is a sense-illusion, not a thought-illusion.

It has sometimes been argued that thought posits its other. It is as I affirm something to be there that it is there. Take away the affirmation, and the thing collapses. But to posit an object is one thing, and to have the sense of given-ness of the object is another. Thought cannot account for the latter. For to posit anything is to be conscious of the fact. How can the thing posited be at the same time given? Given-ness is thus an illusion of the senses pure and simple.

In this connection, we might say something about the controversial subject of the relation of sense and thought. The idealists over-emphasise the latter. They forget that there is no *pure concept* free from all sensuous element. All concepts are sense-ridden. They are essentially materialised concepts. There is no doubt about this, so far as all empirical concepts are concerned. We cannot, for instance, think the concept "dog" without some kind of sensuous image. Take away the sensuous element altogether, and try to think "dog". We shall surely fail. The concept "dog" is not a super-sensible essence, which can be thought independently of all sensuous images. Plato was certainly wrong, if he thought that the ideal world was independent of the sensible world, and represented super-sensible essences. We cannot think a super-sensible essence. To think is to *shape* in thought. If we do not shape in sensible imagery, we use

words which have no meaning for us, and which do not represent any actual thought.

The non-empirical concepts fare no better. The so-called concepts of pure reason, eg. substance or cause and effect, also cannot be thought unless they are tinged with imagination. The concept of causality implies the separation of cause and effect, and the action of one thing upon another thing. But it is quite evident that we can only sensuously separate things. If there is a super-sensuous level, separation cannot be effected. Similarly, the concept of substance is that of an underlying substratum, which brings in the sensuous element once again. Once we try to cancel the sensuous element, every notion of pure reason is transformed. Substance becomes undifferentiated, unqualified and unrelated. We cannot literally think it. It becomes the Absolute. Similarly, the separation of cause and effect gives place to their identity. Such a conception of causality will not be applicable to the empirical world. Vedanta uses these pure concepts in connection with metaphysical reality only, which is without differences and without the causal relation. Ultimate reality is undifferentiated; and the effect, namely the world, is identical with the cause, namely Brahman. This is the non-sensible or intelligible meaning of purely rational concepts.

We shall go so far as to say that no ultimate concept ever used in philosophy can do without a sensuous element. It is not therefore literally ap-

plicable to a truly super-sensible or metaphysical reality. The latter is bound to be beyond all concepts, and is literally unthinkable. It can only be symbolised by certain concepts which point to a reality beyond them. Such are the concepts of God, soul, self, Brahman, etc. Literally speaking, God is the name of a person, who is distinct from the world and from other souls. Every concept has a literal meaning, which involves some limitation derived from our sensible experience. If philosophy has nothing to do except with concepts and their literal meaning, it has nothing to do with any kind of metaphysical reality. But if it must deal with the latter and with nothing else, it must use concepts as symbols only, of a reality which cannot be literally meant or expressed in language. The metaphysical does not represent any meaning which we can literally think; for all our concepts are sense-ridden. If any-one therefore argues that what is known is always some meaning or *padārtha,* he has either to deny the knowledge of the metaphysical reality or to substitute for real knowledge a spurious variety, that is caught in the relativities of terms. Our intellect with its inherent materialism can never apprehend the super-sensible, unless it can find a way to use concepts as symbols only, or as stepping-stones to the vision of that reality which is super-sensible and super-rational.

We have so far tried to show that thought distorts reality; and so does sense with its vagaries and its illusions. Both together constitute the

sense-mind, which is quite incompetent to know the truth. The sense-mind creates a world for us and superimposes it upon reality. If we must know the latter, which represents the truth in our knowledge, erroneous as it it, we must negate the contribution of the sense-mind. When this is done, what will be left will be the thing-in-itself. But will anything be left? We said earlier that it can only be pure being running through all varieties of being. It can have no differences in it, and no limitations of any kind. It is the *sat* character of ultimate reality, representing greatness or infinitude, since nothing can fall outside *sat*.

There are however certain mis-conceptions about this reality which require to be removed. By the very method of our approach, being appears as something outside, a sort of an object-in-itself underlying things. Also it appears empty of all content, and therefore as good as nothing. Both these misconceptions are due to the sense-mind. Our senses seek to apprehend reality outside, in given-ness; and our thought seeks to apprehend reality in content. When these illusions are removed, reality will no longer appear to be outside or as empty. The Kantian thing-in-itself undergoes a transformation. It is no longer an object-in-itself which is a self-contradiction even according to Kant, and it is no longer of the nature of the not-self or something that is *other* to the self and given to it. It becomes indistinguishable from the self. It is the Self itself. It thus becomes truer to say

that the Self alone is known in all that is ever known, not *this that we see,* i.e. the world. It is an error of our understanding to suppose that we know the latter. We know the Self *only,* for it is the truth in all our knowledge. Only we *think* otherwise. We think we know the world, which we ourselves have built with our sense-mind and confused with reality.

Perception is supposed to be a direct form of knowledge. A direct form of knowledge is called intuitive. Evidently, this intuition cannot refer to what is really created by us. It can only refer to the uncreated thing-in-itself. This uncreated thing-in-itself has turned out to be indistinguishable from the Self. If that is so, the Self alone is intuited, if anything is intuited. This intuition, which forms the real basis of all perception, contains no duality of the knower and the known, which is the characteristic of all mediated knowledge or knowledge at the level of thought. What we intuitively apprehend is the Self without the distinction of the subject and the object. In other words, the truth in perception is this self-knowledge. There is no object here and no world. Knowing the Self, *we then know,* or believe ourselves as knowing, the world. In truth, we never know the world. The world is a creation of the sense-mind. And because it is created, it is already dead and past. The dead and the past alone is created, if anything is created. In the living present, nothing can be created; for nothing can take shape. The moment the creation

has taken shape, it is already a thing of the past; and so we can contemplate it as object or as something finished. The world is not a *present reality.* It belongs to the dead past. It is not a fit object of intuition, but only of conception that has created it. The Self alone abides in the present, and it is never past. It alone is a fit object of intuition.

Bergson dimly perceived this truth when he said that the intellect can only apprehend dead matter, and that matter is nothing but the dead embers of the creative vital force. We substitute the Self for the vital force. The Self is the real power. But there is nothing mysterious about this power, as there is something mysterious about the vital force. It does not create. There is no movement in it. Movement belongs to finite power, not to the infinite power. It belongs to thought, which uses the power of the Self for its creative purposes. It is thought that creates matter, and it creates it *in perception.* There is no other meaning for creation. We perform the miracle of creation ourselves when we perceive a world. There is no third-party creation, or creation by God, confronting us with an accomplished fact. We ourselves are the masters of what we create.

We are enticed by the world and entangled in it. And yet it is a snare and a trap which we ourselves have made. The world is a prison-home that we have built for ourselves. We little realize that we are our worst enemies. There is nothing to bind us to a world, with all the sorrows that it is

the mother of, except our own ignorance. By nature we are free. By ignorance we consider ourselves in bondage to a world outside. There is only one original sin. It is the sin of primal ignorance, —the ignorance that I am embodied, that the body is mine. Having confused our real, transcendent, pure and untainted Self with the body, both physical and mental, we act as though the body was an essential part of our Self. We perceive with the body. We think with the body. We use methods of knowledge (*pramāṇās*) immanent in the body. We have created the whole illusion of a world with the body. If we could dissolve the confusion and the error through discriminative thought and see the truth of the Self, the illusion would disappear. The great and mighty world would appear as a mere figment of our imagination, a bad dream, and nothing more. Such is the power of Truth.

If our argument is correct the macro-cosmos, the great world outside, is not merely reflected in the micro-cosmos or the small world inside. It is literally contained in it. The sun is not where it appears. It is in the psycho-physical body, which gives it all the mighty reality that it possesses in the form of light, heat and other qualities. The body is the key to the world. We literally carry our world with ourselves. There is no other world which we do not thus carry, and which is so to say *in-itself*. This is called solipsism in European philosophy. It is regarded as a fallacy, the fallacy of subjectivism. We consider it a great spiritual truth.

Only we must have an eye for it. Subjectivism only terminates when the world terminates, and the Self rises in its place. Short of the knowledge of the Self, we cannot get rid of subjectivism.

This raises the question of the body. The body may be the key to the world. It may create the illusion of a world. But it itself cannot be an illusion. For what is to create this illusion of the body? The body must therefore be real. And if the body is real, the world is real too,—it is in principle an extension of the body. We have a dualism of the Self and the body, which at least is ultimate. We have thus brought in the world by the backdoor in the reality of the body.

CHAPTER III

Body and Soul

The reality of the body may not be denied. It conditions our knowledge of the external world. It is also somehow in relation with an intelligent substance called the soul or the mind. Descartes and some other European philosophers who followed him accepted the dualism of the body and the mind as ultimate. Both were equally real. But how could two such heterogeneous substances interact? That was a problem which perplexed them. Two solutions in the main have been suggested.

Accepting the hetérogeneity, Lotze argued that one substance can act upon another quite different from it. Even in the physical world, we do not know *how* one substance acts upon or moves another. The action is mysterious. It is not a case of a simple transference of an effect. The cause only produces an effect in accordance with the laws of the substance in which the effect is produced. The same cause will thus produce different effects in different substances. Each substance acted upon reacts so to say to the causal action in accordance with its own nature. In the same way, a physical action emanating from a physical substance can only produce an effect in a spiritual

substance, which we may call the soul, in accordance with the intelligent nature of the latter. The mystery is universal, and not confined to the body-mind interaction.

This view is based upon a rather crude notion of the intelligent substance. It is something in the body. It is in physical space. Otherwise, how can a physical contact be established? We have reduced the intelligent substance to some kind of stuff in space. By the same reasoning, even physical things may be taken to be essentially spiritual,—souls or monads. There is no clear dividing line between matter and spirit. Vedanta alone draws the line unerringly within our experience. All things may be spiritual, and perhaps are spiritual. But that which can be presented as object or as "this" is for that reason alone unintelligent and non-spiritual. As opposed to all objects, there is the intuition of the self. The self can never be presented as "this." The moment we are conscious of something as "this", we distinguish it from the self, and call it the not-self. The Self or the *ātman*, which is never an object, is the only true spirit. The body is evidently "this" to me. So are the mental states, which constitute the inner life of the individual. The dualism of the body and the mind, from this point of view, is worse than useless. The mind is no less non-spiritual than the body. We can know all that constitutes what we call our mind in the objective attitude. The true spirit is beyond the mind. It is the Self or the *ātman*. This

puts a new complexion upon the whole problem of the mind-body relation.

Another solution offered by European philosophers is that there are not two heterogeneous substances at all. Body and its behaviour are known. Different people can observe the same behaviour. What is called mind-substance is not known. Different persons cannot observe what passes in a so-called mind. The mind is a function of the body only. We judge what is in the mind by the behaviour of the body. Ideas are different only in so far as they lead to different forms of behaviour. Thus there are no two heterogeneous substances in relation. There is one substance only, namely the body. It expresses itself in two end-products, the physical and the mental. Mind is not denied. What is denied is its separate existence apart from the body and its external relation to the body. There is thus no problem of relating the body and the mind.

This view has a very distant affinity with the Vedantic view about the mind. According to Vedanta, there is indeed a mind-substance called *antahkaraṇa*. But there is nothing spiritual about it. It is a kind of subtle matter, and is essentially material. Only, it is prior to, and more real than, the gross physical body. The disintegration of the latter therefore does not amount to the disintegration of the former, which is the subtle body of the soul or the spirit. The mind is, in an important sense, non-spiritual; and the dualism of the body

and the mind is, to that extent, unwarranted. What the view under consideration ignores is the reality of the essentially intelligent substance, the object of the intuition of "I" or the self. The self is not an idea; for it is the knower and the revealer of every idea. The self is not something mental; for it reveals the mind, and all its processes and states. The self is not really presentable. It is that to which everything is presented. This intuition of the Self is available to every-one who can reflect upon his experience. It is nothing mysterious. It is open, and quite true. The real problem is the relation of this intelligent Self to the body as a whole, including the mind which is the subtler body. European philosophers are not aware of this problem, because they have never taken seriously the reality of the spirit in the form of the Self. Their notion of the spirit is exhausted by thought, feeling and will, which are functions of the mind. If they accept a personality beyond these functions, it is still *some mysterious entity* called the soul, together with its mental paraphernalia. But neither the mental function, nor its supposed spiritual basis, the soul, has anything spiritual about it, *so far as our experience is concerned.* How to relate spirit and matter is a real problem, which only arises when these concepts are clearly delimited.

We now come to the body-spirit relation. It will now be admitted by all that the physical body is in a sense in a privileged position. Of all material objects, the body alone is in direct relation

with an intelligent self. I always confuse my self with the body. I do not confuse my self with things clearly external to the body. We often say, pointing to the body, "Here I am", or "This is myself." The body is that part of the material world, which I have taken up, put on as a garment, and identified with the self. I have control over the body. It is my body. I can move it as I choose. I have no control over the physical world. It is not *my* world, which I can move as I choose. It is a common world. If I want to be related to this world, I can be related to it only through the body. I must use my ear in order to hear sounds, use my eye in order to see colours, etc. The intelligent self cannot directly contact the world. So far however as the body itself is concerned, it requires no further intermediary. The body is directly identified with the self, and is felt from within. This identification of the self with the body and its sense-organs is presupposed by all perceptual knowledge. This is true even when we perceive certain parts of the body. When I look at my hand, the hand is, in that situation, like any physical object, such as a piece of wood. But the eye with which I see is in a privileged position; for I do not, and cannot, see the eye. I might touch the eye-ball with my hand; but then the eye-ball is like any physical object which is touched by me, while the hand with which I touch it, and which has now become the vehicle of a new sensation, is in a privileged position,—it cannot be touched in its turn.

The body has thus a dual role. As perceived, it is nothing but physical. But as perceiving, or as an instrument of perception, it is itself intelligent, being one with the intelligent self. It is then incapable of being objectified or perceived. Can we still call it physical? Has it not lost its physicality and become non-distinct from the spirit or the intelligent self? Anything that is in indentity with the Self cannot be contemplated objectively at the same time, and in that sense it has lost its physicality. The spectacles are physical; and yet when we see *with* them, we cannot see *at* them. Can we still regard them as physical, when they have none of the objectivity of physical things? Similarly, the eye can see everything else, but it cannot see itself. The ear can hear everything else, but it cannot hear itself. The hand can touch everything else, but it cannot touch itself, etc. Each sense-organ, as functioning intelligently, is in complete identity with the Self. It is the Self itself. We can draw no line between the two. Matter has verily become a limb of the spirit, and is the spirit itself. For, lapse of objectivity is the lapse of materiality. That is our only one criterion for distinguishing matter from spirit.

We can now decide the question of the reality of the body. In so far as the body is material and a fit object for our various senses, it has no more reality than the rest of the material world. The question of its distinct reality or greater reality does not arise. If the world is illusory, so is the

body which is part of this world. But in so far as the body or any part of the body functions intelligently and becomes, as we say, a creative agency of the self, it is no part of the world. It is not material in any intelligible sense of the term. We may call it a non-material power or a *devatta*. But even this has got to be objectified and materialised, so that in the end there is no alternative to the reality of the pure spirit. The sense-organ as an adjunct (*upādhi*) of the spirit, and as identified with the spirit, has all the reality of the spirit. There is no other reality called the reality of the body.

It will now be argued that we have given two extreme views. The body is either a part of the material world, or it has all the reality of the Self itself. Neither of these positions is defensible. The body is really in a middle position. It is an intelligent *instrument* of the self. We have the feeling of seeing *with* the eye, hearing *with* the ear, and so on. But what is the status of an instrument of that sort? Is it something intelligent or something material or a third something? A third something is unthinkable and impossible. All that we can say is that it is something material that has acquired a false intelligent character through its relation of identity with the Self. So far therefore as its own reality is concerned, it is the reality of matter, no more and no less. It does not offer a new problem to thought.

The body, under no circumstances, has any reality that is independent of the Self. It does not

exist side by side with the *Self*. When we so think of it, it is just like any other object which is perceived, and which is created in the perception of it. But if the body does not exist side by side with the Self, the Self also cannot be said to exist *within* the body. The body does not enclose a soul or a self, as a box encloses its contents. The box and its contents are both physical. The self is not physical. How can it be contained? It is truer therefore to say that the soul contains the body than that the body contains the soul. And how does the soul contain the body? It contains it in perception which is the reality of all matter. Alternatively, it contains it as what is in identity with itself, and so non-distinct from it. *In no case is the self related to the body as one real thing is related to another.* That would detract from the non-physicality and the spirituality of the self. The self is only related, if it is at all related, by way of identity. This identity can never be real. No two things are ever identical. The identity can only be false. It is called *mithyā tādātmya,* or false identification. We find this relation between the real and the illusory, never between two real things. The self is therefore never really related. It is only falsely related; because the other term of the relation is false, i.e., it appears real only through the relation, like all illusory objects. If then the body is related to the self, it is related only by way of false identification, which leaves the purity and the non-physicality of the self untouched.

This fundamental unrelatedness of the self is further proved by our natural and normal intuition of it. While everything else is known as related, —being different in time or in space, or different in qualities, etc.,—the self is not thus known. For it cannot be objectified; and only objects can be related. As a matter of fact, the Self is known as the very negation of all relations. What is particularly important to note here is that we have no intuition of the Self as *something in the body*, as we have an intuition of a pen as something in our pocket. The Self is not in the heart or in the head or in any other part of the body. It is a real whole in itself, of which the body, in-so-far as it is falsely identified with it, is a limitation. Verily I am the Whole, the Infinite and the Absolute. But falsely taking on the body, I have come to regard myself as finite and limited. All the ills of life are due to the body and its false association with the Self. In the infinite freedom and the joy of the Self, the body with all its desires and hankerings is a painful limitation. But to one who sees the Self where others see the body, or who sees the body in the Self, the limitations of the body are reduced to nothing. The dropping away of the body cannot possibly affect the Self. In fact, the passing away is a loss to the body, if it is a loss at all; for the body ceases to be related to the Self, and ceases therefore to have the importance which it derived from its false relation. The Self is incorruptible and indestructible. It is not really embodied, and it does not die. The body

alone dies, if anything dies. Why should we worry about the death of what is not our Self? We do not worry about the death of *another*, except through irrational attachment or *moha*. Neither should we worry about the death of the body.

To sum up, the Self appears embodied or joined to a body. This is our primal ignorance, and the cause of all our ills. What is true of the physical body is also true of the mental body or the inner life of the individual. That too is a limitation, only subtler in character. We confuse the mind more easily with the spirit than we do the physical body. But to the discriminating insight, there is no difference in principle. The conception of the spirit far transcends the conception of personality, whether finite or infinite. The body and the soul are indeed one substance, not two. But this one substance is pure spirit. It is monism at the other end, or a monism of the extreme type. The spirit, in the form of the Self, alone exists, and nothing beside it does.

CHAPTER IV

Substance Versus Process

We perceive physical reality. The only way we can describe this reality is in terms of certain sensible qualities. The distinction of substance and qualities is thus forced upon us. In a perceptual judgment, we refer certain qualities to a substance. We do not know the substance directly or as it is in itself. We know it only through the qualities. It is a question how far this knowledge can be held to be valid. But we are not here concerned with this question of validity. We are concerned with the more general question about the nature of reality itself that is perceived,—is it of the nature of *substance* or of the nature of *process?*

It is arguable that reality is not static. It is dynamic. It is of the nature of change or process. Change cannot be sensibly perceived. What is sensibly perceived is naturally static. Change is not something static. It is not at the surface. At the surface are certain images which succeed one another. This succession indeed implies change, but it is not the essence of change. Real change can only be intuited when we enter sympathetically into the innermost being of things. We then know change as something dynamic. It has inner development or growth. It has real duration as against the discontinuous moments of life which is all

that we can perceive from the outside and at the surface of things. Thus reality is essentially dynamic and temporal. The so-called matter, on the other hand, is in space. It has extension or externality of parts, not interpenetration. It is reality that has lost its upward surge and its creativity, and become dead and inert. It is reality in its spent-out and degenerated form. We do not perceive the truth about reality when we perceive it as matter. We must develop a new instrument of knowledge called intuition, in order to get at the heart of things.

This view was made popular by Bergson. It has taken different forms in voluntaristic systems. It arose as a protest against the too intellectualistic view of reality as a block universe. Reality is not static or immutable, so far as we know. There is no such thing as a timeless Absolute; and since this notion is based upon the notion of substance, that is always identical with itself, the latter too must be rejected as invalid. There is no substance anywhere. Reality is movement and change, or more briefly process.

A process can be divided and sub-divided into events of smaller and smaller duration. If there are any ultimate constituents of reality, it is these events, not substances. In the end, we must suppose that there are point-events which cannot be further sub-divided. But since these point-events must possess the essential nature of process, which is *creativity* and the *attainment of a certain end or satisfaction,* each point-event, or actual occasion as

it is sometimes called, must contain two poles,—the pole of satisfaction when it attains the maximum of subjective being, and the pole of creation when it itself ceases to exist but attains immortality in that which it creates. In short, (1) the real is momentary. It ceases to exist the very moment it has attained its being. (2) And it has causal efficiency,—it is creative of the next member in the series. Here is the voluntaristic counterpart of substance. The point-event has no change. It has no internal moments. Its birth is its death. It is changeless like a substance; but unlike a substance, it is part of a process and creative of its successor. This view of reality has evidently a great affinity with the Buddhistic view on the matter. Reality is both efficient and momentary.

Is this view tenable? Can we substitute the notion of event for the notion of substance? It is evident that every event, small or big, has a certain internal unity. What is the nature of this unity? We should naturally suppose that it is the unity of an *underlying substance* that experiences, or passes through, certain changes of states. Every event, however brief, is born, has a duration or life, decays and dies. We naturally refer these moments in the life of an event to a self-identical entity. It is one and the same entity that passes through these changes of states, and is therefore present *in them.* Otherwise, we shall be thrown back on the paradoxical assertion that one entity is born and another dies. Thus the unity of an event is most easily and

naturally understood in terms of an underlying substance.

This view may be controverted through the notion of the point-event, which does not undergo any change, and which therefore has no moments that require to be referred to an underlying unity. But then the point-event, being itself unchanging, is substance in the most conventional sense of that term. How can it be *born* and how can it *die*? We cannot construct a process, involving birth and death, out of unchanging entities. We may place any number of these entities side by side, but that will not make a process. To make a process, the unchanging character of the entities must be melted in the process, so that we have a birth, followed by growth, maturity, decay and death. Any component of "reality as process" must show all these phases. But then it cannot be instantaneous, and so without duration. The notion of the point-event as the ultimate constituent of reality goes counter to the notion of reality as process. The unchanging cannot be a primary part of a process or change.

It may be argued here that if we are serious with the notion of process, we must liquidate every substantival element in it. Nothing must continue self-identical in it. If anything is born, that moment it must die. It must have no life-span from birth to death, involving the assertion that something is born, lives and dies, and therefore continues self-identical in these successive phases of a unitary whole. The reality of a process consists just in

this, that the birth of an entity in it is also its death. Thus the birth is not divided from death by any interval of time. *Birth is death.*

Is this intelligible? If birth does not *precede* death in time, the two terms become synonymous. There is no distinction between them, and in saying that something has birth *and* death, we say nothing at all that will prove that the something is part of a process, involving change. We have in fact no meaning for *and* connecting the two terms. We have a purely verbal proposition in which the two terms 'birth' and 'death', although diametrically opposed in meaning in common usage, signify one and the same thing whatever that may be.

Let us now suppose that the proposition "birth is death" is a material proposition, not a verbal one. It can be argued, for instance, that in a process, every element that is brought into being can be viewed from two different points of view,—the birth of A is the death of the preceding element B. But even so, the death of B is one thing and quite intelligible in itself, and the birth of A another. The disappearance of one thing cannot be the *same* as the appearance of another. The two cannot be essentially connected. They are two separate occurrences, divided by negation, or by an *interval of time* however short. The death of B must take place *first.* It can only be *followed* by the birth of A. This "following" can only be interpreted in terms of a succession of moments. There is no getting out of the common-sense view that the

death of B is *followed* by the birth of A; and similarly, the birth of A is *followed* by its death. Thus birth and death are naturally separated. The latter cannot synchronise with the former. If it does, nothing will come to birth at all. Something must be born and have a being, before it can lose being and die. If birth is literally death, the whole process will collapse in a point, without any character and without any change or movement in it.

A further new explanation however can be attempted of the statement that birth is death. We can argue that *what is born is already dead*. It is dead in birth. When it is born, it is at the same time dead. It is not the case that something is born *first,* and *then* it dies. There is no succession and no temporal interval between birth and death. Or what is the same thing, whatever *is* at the same time *is not*. This is the very essence of every element that forms part of a process. It never really *is* at any time. Or as the Buddhists graphically put it,—not only is it impossible to have a dip twice in the same river, but it is impossible to have a dip in the same river *even once*.

But how can we combine being and non-being in one and the same thing at the same time? A contradiction is not literally thinkable. It is a challenge to thought rather than an accomplished thought. Here however we have a *fact* that involves contradiction. But how can a self-contradictory fact exist, or even appear to exist? It can only be said to exist in the sense that something

that appears to exist does not really exist. There is an illusory appearance. An appearance has no real being or has only a borrowed being. Its being is the being of the ground. It is nothing in itself. This nothing *in-itself* still appears; and to that extent, it is not mere non-being, which cannot even appear. It is only being that can appear, not non-being. In other words, if we are to combine being and non-being in a fact as we do in an illusion, we must make being the ground of non-being, and interpret non-being as illusory being. It is only being that can illusorily appear; and being takes us straight to substance, something that merely *is*.

The tendency of those philosophers, however, who take all reality as process, is just the other way. Because all reality is momentary (*kṣaṇik*), and thus combines being and non-being, it is really non-being (*sunya*) that illusorily appears as being. But how can non-being appear at all? What can it lend to the appearance of being? Out of nothing, nothing. Non-being cannot contain being even as an appearance. The true state of affairs is just the opposite. Out of being, being. This is the Vedantic way. It implies the ultimate reality of substance, something that merely *is* or is *in itself*. The opposite view is the view of Buddhists, who exalt non-being or *sunya* to the position of ultimate reality or as the stuff of all things. But unless non-being is only another name for real being, which is capable of being illusorily perceived and also capable of being known truly in a higher intel-

lectual intuition, the Buddhistic view fails to explain the illusory appearance of being, which combines being with non-being.

We here take liberty to consider another aspect of the same problem, namely the illusoriness of the world of appearances. It is common ground between Buddhism and Vedanta that the world consists of differents. But a thing cannot be *different in itself*, but only *from* some other thing called its *pratiyogi*. In fact, nothing that is *in itself* and nothing that is *positive in nature* can be different. When we know the positive nature, the matter really ends there. We have no need to go beyond it. Difference does not enter into it. The thing that is positive can have no element of negation in it, and therefore no reference to what it is not. Nothing that forms part of the world is positive in this sense. It is always different, and different from what it is not. Thus every thing can be analysed away into its relations of difference, *and nothing positive is left which it can unconditionally claim for itself*. This may naturally lead to the conclusion that the thing is *nothing in itself*, and that it has no positive content or positive nature. It is mere or pure negation, or *sunya*. This is the Buddhistic conclusion.

An objection against such a conclusion naturally suggests itself. It may be argued, how can a thing be different without being something in itself. Unless a thing has being and is something, it cannot be different. We always ask, *what* is differ-

ent?, implying that some kind of being is different. Non-being cannot be different; for it is nothing at all that can sustain a difference. If it is nevertheless different, non-being is treated as some kind of being. All differences are in this sense *of* being and *within* being. Thought can move within being alone. The so-called difference of being and non-being is really unthinkable. It is fictitious.

This view appears plausible. But there is a certain interpretation of it which cannot be upheld. If what is meant is that a thing must have a positive character and must also be different from another thing on the basis of this character, the question naturally arises, can it have a positive character *without being different?* Can the positive character be realized by itself without reference to what goes beyond it and is different from it? If not, difference, and so negation, enter into its very nature as positive. Difference is not a mere *accident* supervening upon the so-called positive nature, which could perhaps do without it. It enters into its very substance; so that no difference, no positive nature. To say what a thing is, is to say what it is not. It is what the thing is *not* that circumscribes the thing, and determines its positive content. In other words, a positive something is not *in itself*. It is *in another*. To that extent, it cannot escape negation. Difference is present in everything that is positive, and is part of its meaning. Nothing is purely positive.

To vary the terminology, we might say that every positive character of a thing is relative. When all its relations are eliminated, it is reduced to nothing. It is nothing in itself, which is the same thing as to say that it is *sunya*. This is the Buddhistic position.

There is however another interpretation of the view under discussion which cannot be so easily disposed of. In order that something should be different, it must evidently have some kind of being. For being alone can sustain differences, not non-being. Thus a positive basis of being is indicated in all things that are different. Only this positive basis cannot be *itself different*. It must be being that is common and pervasive, and so incapable of being delimited or negated. It is the unity in all things,—the universal ground on which differences can be erected. All things, in so far as they are positive and in-themselves, are really nothing but this ground. Differences stand outside this ground, and do not constitute the essential or the fundamental nature of things as they are *in themselves*. Must we not conclude that differences are superimposed upon the ground through our ignorance of it, and that they are mere appearance, quite illusory in nature? Things appear to be known and appear to be different; but in truth they are not different and are only erroneously known to be such. This is the Vedantic solution of the problem of difference. It stands in contrast with the Buddhistic solution. What is common to

them is that the world is illusory, because it consists of things which are different. But while the Buddhists argue to the absolute lack of positivity and so to *sūnya-vada,* Vedantists argue to pure and unconditioned positivity as the ground of the differences of things. Reality for the latter is without differences of any kind. It is unrelated, unconditioned and absolute. It is the goal of true knowledge.

We have already considered process as change, and found that change is unintelligible without the notion of an underlying substance. We shall now proceed to consider another aspect of process, namely its dynamic aspect. Let us grant that the world consists of a series of events, and that there is nothing stable in it. Change is, let us say, universal. But change implies power to move or the power of creativity. Without this power, change cannot *occur.* In such a scheme of things, the real must be creative, and *vice-versa.* The question is, what is the nature of the creative power?

It will be generally admitted that every event in nature is determined by a proximate cause; and further that, every event is in turn an effect and a cause. It is the effect of a predecessor-event, and the cause of a successor-event. There is thus no first cause or a real cause that is not in its turn an effect. All causes are secondary causes; and no secondary cause is a free cause that can *initiate* a movement or a change. It is at best only a transmitting agency of a power that is outside of it.

What it causes to exist can thus be traced to this power, which is the only real cause. This cause cannot form part of the series of events which constitute nature. It can only be a non-natural and free cause,—free in the sense that it is not in its turn caused to exist. It is the uncaused cause. We might even say that it is self-caused and self-existent. It is not *creature* in any sense. It is the creator pure and simple. We may call it 'God' or by some other name. What is important is that it stands outside nature and is the only explanation of nature. Once it is brought within nature as part of its processes, it will require to be initiated in its turn or caused to exist from the outside. *The real creator must therefore exist of himself and enter into no process as part of it.* He must be literally an unmoved mover. As contrasted with *process*, he can only be truly described as *substance*. Thus nature implies God as its creator; and God does not have to move out of his being in order to create.

The hypothesis of a Creator-God may appear unintelligible and untenable. We have no evidence of any such being. We know only nature; and nature is a closed system. It in a way explains itself. Each constituent element in the series of events which constitute nature can be understood to be a creature and a creator in turn. There need be no contradiction in this; for the creature-aspect may be said to precede the creator-aspect in the life of each actual entity. There is thus nothing that is essentially dead or inert, nothing that is

merely created. Everything is vibrating with life, and has the power to create. The duality of matter that is only created and spirit that only creates is quite unreal. There is only *one kind of reality*, and that reality is fully efficient and creative.

There is an additional consideration for this unity of all being. To create inert matter is to create something that can realize no kind of value. If God has created the physical world, he has created no value. Value can only be achieved by creating free and independent creators, who can add to the totality of values. Or as it is some times said, God creates nothing, if he does not create creators. But if that is so, the dichotomy of God and nature must be given up. It is more plausible to hold that every element of reality is both a creature and a creator than to hold that there is only one creator, and that what he creates is a creature only, never a creator. On the latter view, the world becomes devoid of both reality and value. The process in time, which is the world, can make no real advance or progress towards the realization of an unaccomplished goal or value. In fact, time itself ceases to be real; for there is no *creative activity* in it. Once the world is created, every change in it must be supposed to take place quite mechanically. The world-movement becomes merely the unravelling of what God has put in the original creative act. The process in time is only a puppet-show. Nothing can save anything or anybody that is created from an inexorable Des-

tiny; for everything was written, when the world-process was brought into being.

This reasoning, it appears to us, is not quite convincing. Can the world be a closed system? Can creators be created? Is there no qualitative distinction between a creator and a creature? These questions require to be answered. Let us begin with the last question. We now contend that a creator is not a cause in the ordinary sense. In the ordinary sense, causality is mechanical. The cause being given, the effect follows automatically. This has its own problems, which are perhaps insoluble on their own ground or if mechanical causality is taken literally. Where does the cause cease and the effect begin? Is the cause identical with the effect or different from it, etc? However we may seek to answer these questions, there is no doubt that cause in this sense *does nothing* and *creates nothing.* It is transformed into the effect, *without retaining its own individuality or separate being.* It represents neither power nor creative freedom. All power is a free creative power. It is in the end the power of the will, which is the only free creative agency.

What is this will? We can only understand it as a function of a purposeful being, who exists prior to the function and who seeks to carry out his purposes through it. In other words, there must be a self-identical individual or person behind the will. This person cannot be affected or changed in any way through the exercise of his will. For,

if he is changed, the will ceases to be his function; it is the person that becomes the function of the will,—it is the will that makes him what he is. In other words, the act is the only reality. There is nothing beyond or behind the act. *But is not a will that belongs to no person, and that carries out no purpose of any being that both precedes and survives the will, a monstrosity?* The will demands a self-identical person, who may will one way or another, or not will at all,—*and who yet remains the same.* It is only such a *person* who is free, and who can exercise his freedom through the will. It is not the will that is free.

If our argument is correct, the world demands a Creator-God, who is omnipotent in the sense that he is the source and the centre of all that power of which the world is a manifestation. The world of change and movement belongs to the creature-category; and God is the only Creator or Actor. For He is not the creature of any power outside of Him, but the Master-Controller of all power. This is implied in all true freedom.

The argument can be extended to cover every free agent. It is arguable, for instance, that every human individual has a will, and is therefore a free agent. He ought to be omnipotent. But is he really so? We contend that he is really omnipotent *in so far as he is free.* But his freedom is overlaid with certain elements which are incompatible with true freedom. There are stresses and strains in his life which detract from his freedom, and determine

his will so to say from the outside. He is not always master of himself, and so of his will. Whenever he acts mechanically, or through the force of habit, or under the stress of desire, or through subjection to authority of any kind,—whether it is the authority of society or of the scripture or even of the moral law,—he is not wholly free. We are only struggling for freedom, seeking to subdue our lower animal nature through principles of a moral order. Our nature is composite. It is neither purely divine nor purely animal. The animal and the mechanical in us is always at war with the divine and the free in us. This gives meaning and sense to the injunctions of religion and of morality. We are not yet quite free. There is only an illusion of freedom in us. If we could do away with external pulls of every kind, or negate all demands of self-interest of a finite and limited self that has divided himself from the life of the whole, our will would be free and also omnipotent. It would be indistinguishable from the will of God. The divine will, being above warring elements of human nature, is also above morality. It knows no authority of law. Whatever it wills is on that account alone good and valuable. In fact, it is not open to the moral judgment. It is goodness personified. The good is not mixed up with the bad, and so limited in any way. True freedom thus implies not only omnipotence, but also absolute goodness or value. We can now conclude that every individual, in-so-far as he has a will, is made in the image of

God. He is really free and divine. But he fails to recognise that; and he is always struggling to realise his true divine nature through acts of morality and in other ways implanted in his complex personality.

Our analysis of the notion of "creator" has shown that a creator must be a free cause. Further, a free cause must be an immutable or unchanging cause. It must be outside all 'process', and the initiator of it. In other words, a creator is never a creature. His freedom implies not only freedom *beyond* being,— where all being is determinate, momentary and caused to exist, as the Buddhists argue,—it also implies, as we have argued, freedom *of* being, or free being, or being in its own right, or uncreated being. Thus we come back to the notion of substance in the analysis of the element of efficiency in a process. The unmoved mover or the immutable is the only cause of 'process.'

But how can these opposing elements be reconciled? How can the immutable act? Must it not move out of its being in order to create? If it remains merely itself, nothing will happen, and nothing will be brought into being. If however it acts, it has already moved or changed in the act. The act cannot leave the actor unaffected. In fact, to act is to project oneself into the act, and to become, so to say, part of it. We cannot remain outside or behind the act, and still act. For, in that case, we would be unrelated to the act, and we

could in no sense be said to be responsible for it. We can also appeal, in this connection, to our common experience. If we do a good act, we seem to have become better men ourselves to that extent, and we advance in our own self-estimation. If we do a wrong act, the effect is the opposite, and we seem ourselves to have morally degenerated. We *become* as we act. Our actions make us what we are at any time.

We do not deny the facts. But we ought to distinguish the appearance from the reality in those facts. The appearance is that the act is part of us, and that if we have acted, we have to that extent moved with the act. But in that case, where is the need to distinguish the actor from the act? As soon as the act has issued out of him, he is there no more. There is only the act. Where is the actor? Or if he is there, the act itself is the actor, just as some philosophers say that thought is the thinker and that there is no thinker over and above the thought and so distinct from it. There is no sense then in saying that the actor acts. The act itself is the whole thing, and nothing more is needed to give reality to it. If we accept this analysis of the relation of the act and the actor, we eliminate the actor. There is then no getting out of the Buddhistic thesis that everything is impermanent and momentary. But would it be a true analysis of the act *as willed or as an expression of freedom*? Is the act free or the actor?

We contend that it is of the essence of an act to be initiated or *put forth*. To be put forth, it requires something outside the act. This something cannot be another act; for that will require an actor too outside of itself. The only thing that can initiate an act will be a literally *non-acting reality*. It is the only true actor. An actor remains the same whether he acts or whether he does not, whether he acts in one way or in another. He is before the act, during the act, and after it; and he can reflect upon the act as his own,—as something which he has put forth and which he can also withdraw. He is greater than the act and the sole reality behind it.

But how shall we account for the act? How can the act issue out of a reality that is unchanging and immutable and that remains the same in all its acts? The only answer is that this reality is the cause of the act in a very specific sense. What does not act *appears acting* through false identification of itself with the instruments of action and with the act itself. The will may be regarded as an instrument of activity,—I will an act, and the act ensues. Here I falsely identify myself with the mental form called the will, and through the will with the act which I claim to be *mine*. But the will itself may be regarded as a mental act. In that case, I directly identify myself with the act, which is the will. "I will" is the fundamental error. I do nothing of the sort. I do absolutely nothing. I remain what I am, eternally my own true Self. I become an actor,

and so related to the act, only through ignorance of my Self. The Self is, in the phraseology of Vedanta, the *vivarta upādāna* of all the acts that are said to issue out of it. The Self never acts. It appears acting through ignorance and through false identification only.

If our analysis is correct, I do not really will. I am unconnected with the will. But then is not the will "free" as we pointed out earlier? We now find that there is no such thing as *free willing*, which is a self-contradiction. Freedom lies not in the will, but in my being, which is free being, understood negatively as uncaused, uncreated and immutable being. There is only a false appearance of freedom in the will. The will, if anything, is a limitation upon my freedom of being; for the moment I mistakenly identify myself with the will, which is an act of the mind, and affirm that I will, I take upon myself the act and its consequences; and this is a limitation. Freedom cannot determine itself one way or another. *There is no such thing as self-determination within freedom itself.* Freedom is free,—and that is the end of the matter. All promptings to action are inspired by external forces, not by any forces inherent in freedom. Freedom has *no reason* to go out of itself and determine itself in particular acts. The moment it does so, it loses its free stand. The best will in the world, the good will, binds the self to some activity and to the implications of that activity, namely that I am an actor, with obligations to society, and ends that are good or bad, etc; it

binds me to the goal of the activity, and to all the immediate and mediate consequences of the activity. This is bondage, even if the motives that inspire the activity are in the best sense moral or rational. I need to be finite, and governed by the motives of a finite human nature, in order to have a motive for activity and a moral content for it. Real freedom, however, is incompatible with any such determination of it. It stays free, unconnected with acts, their motives and their ends. There is nothing good or bad for it. The good is only a lesser evil, a lesser bondage. Paradoxical although it may seem, we regain our freedom through the very negation of the will. We cease to have a will. The will, and all that it implies, leads us into bondage. True freedom does not manifest itself in acts, as is generally thought. Acts are only a degradation of freedom. Its true manifestation is in immutable and free being. To know one's self as non-acting in all acts is to realize one's true freedom.

We have so far analysed change as process and the element of efficiency in it. We shall now analyse our perception of change. It is quite evident that if change is universal and there is nothing stable anywhere, as the Buddhists supposed, change itself could not be perceived. There will be what is called *jagatāndha* or the non-perception of a world. Nothing will be there to bring together into a unity successive elements in order to construct a process or change. It is only the unity of consciousness or the identity of the percipient self through

successive states that makes the appearance of change, and so of a changing world, possible. Can change, in-so-far as it is perceived by us, and so is meaningful to us, dispense with substantival being?

We shall go farther and ask, do we perceive real change or only an appearance of change? Or what is the same thing, is change, as perceived, real? To perceive change, we must not perceive something as static. We must perceive something changing into something else. The something that changes has a substantival character. It has, to begin with, a standing being. It is *that* something, and can be described in terms of certain static qualities. That into which the something changes has equally a substantival character. A change is marked by these two ends which are both substantival. What about the interval between these two ends? Is not that at least real change? It appears to us that the interval has no separate or independent kind of reality. It is not what may be called a pure movement or a pure change. It is a movement *from* one position *to* another position, or a change *from* one substantival being *to* another substantival being, *taken as a whole*. We cannot isolate it from its static ends, and apprehend it as some kind of reality different from the reality of the ends. *It is part and parcel of one substantival and standing being defined by the two ends.* It is a whole which is simultaneously realized in perception. It is in every respect a substance. The truth is that we never perceive anything *in the making*, but only *as made*. All process

or change is thus substantival *as perceived;* and outside perception, *it has no meaning* for us.

Do we then really perceive change as what is *distinct* from substance? We seem to do so; but on analysis, we find that the apparent change is really substantival, and that substantiality is, in knowledge at least, universal. The distinction which we draw is unreal and illusory. There is no getting away from substance, so far as all our knowledge is concerned. *We know only substance, and nothing else.*

But can we not give some other analysis of our perception of change in order to justify the reality of change? After all change cannot be denied altogether. It is quite significant to us even when we deny it. For we are denying something; and we cannot deny, without knowing the same. If perception does not give us this knowledge, it may be replaced by some other kind of knowledge, which is more intimate and penetrating. Perception admittedly involves an intellectualisation, and so a materialisation, of reality. It cannot grasp the essential movement of reality, for which a new instrument of knowledge, called intuition, may be needed.

Now we do not deny the meaningfulness of the concept of change. Change may therefore be said to be known in a way. But there is knowledge and knowledge. An appearance is also said to be known. But it does not on that account become reality. We distinguish it from reality, and claim to know it only erroneously. The moment we analyse our

knowledge of it, it discloses itself for what it is, a mere appearance, illusory in character. The reality is quite different from the appearance. The same may be said about our knowledge of change.

As to a higher form of knowledge which is more appropriate to reality, it will have to answer certain questions about the nature of that which it claims to know. If what we apprehend is real change, is there nothing that undergoes change? If there is something that undergoes change, it must evidently stay through the change. It must support the whole process of change, and remain self-identical through it. If A changes into B, it must somehow continue into B. It may exchange one set of characters for another set, but its essential identity must remain unaffected. It is this identity that gives continuity to the process.

It may be said that the proposition that something self-identical or substantival alone changes is a mis-statement. It is due *to* the inadequacy of our language that we describe change in terms of things, or that we even ask the question, *what changes?* Things or substances do not change. We have prejudiced the whole analysis of change by our slavery to lingual forms. Change is opposed to the very notion of substance. Unless therefore we liquidate the latter completely, we have not got at real change. But even so, how do we describe our knowledge of real change? Let us try it. Can we describe it in any significant language? If all language is inadequate for the purpose, and change is

literally indescribable, can we be said to *know* it? Instead of saying that something changes into something else, we might quite as well say that nothing changes into nothing, which is just a caricature of change. It makes no sense.

The least that is required in order to describe change is that something ceases to exist or something is born. But this is more easily said than understood. For what do we mean by saying that something ceases to exist? We cannot make a rational transition from being to non-being. If something has being, it may change into some other kind of being, but it cannot become nothing. We have no experience of a transition from being into absolute non-being. Where this appears to be so, the sense of being is not lost, but continues into non-being; so that we say that the something has *passed into* the state of death or of non-being. In other words, being is present in non-being or life in death. That which dies must be present in death or experience death. Otherwise, where is the relation between *it* and death, and what can we make of the proposition "*it* dies"? Why can we not say that something that exists *merely exists*, and something that dies *merely dies*? If we could say this, being would always be being, and non-being would always be non-being, and there would be no transition from the one to the other. That would indeed be rational. Nothing ceases to be, and nothing is born. But we do not say that. We connect being with non-being, life with death, and we say, "that which

exists is destroyed." This statement is meaningless unless what we mean is that what is destroyed experiences destruction, and so continues to exist as the basis of the destructive process and is never itself destroyed. Thus, however we may look at the problem, what we really know in change is the unchanging. The rest is *mere appearance,* which is supported by the unchanging substance as its ground.

Let us however take the view seriously that perception is not a correct way of knowing change, but that some kind of intuition (which we can only understand as some kind of inchoate feeling, having no cognitive value) is. It is evident now that all perceptual elements will have to be withdrawn from the intuition in question. What will be left will not be describable in the ordinary language of change or movement which is loaded with substantival elements. It will be, let us say, pure change or pure movement. But can this be distinguished from pure being, or as some would have it, even from pure non-being? The truth is that all our knowledge is intellectualised. If it is not intellectualised, nothing will emerge as *object.* Thought alone gives form to or creates all objects, whether static or dynamic. In the absence of thought, there may be pure intuition, but there can be no *objective knowledge.* If then we are serious with the conception of intuition, we must transcend all objects, and seek to grasp intuitively the non-objective ground of all objects, whether static or dynamic. Change

can then be perceived as the creation of thought on an unchanging and non-objective ground. This is the only reality in all appearance of change, and this can be intuitively known. In fact, thought itself will then be transformed into an instrument of intuition, and cease to be discursive. There is such a thing as an intellectual intuition of a supra-rational reality.

We conclude that substance is the truth of all appearance of change and movement. We know substance only, if we know anything at all.

CHAPTER V

Our Knowledge of Logical Form

We know facts in *perception.* But this is in a way the least important part of what we actually know. We are always seeking to go beyond facts, immediately given, to a more generalized knowledge which will embrace those facts. We call this knowledge scientific knowledge. It is reached through certain processes of thought called inductive reasoning. The value of the knowledge in question evidently depends upon the value of the principles of inductive reasoning.

Thought is not only inductive, but it is also deductive. Both these processes are involved in the logic used by science. A generalization embracing a set of facts is not arrived at *step by step,* or through a process of thought which is self-evidently true. It is arrived at all at once in one sweep of imaginative construction. We have an idea or a hypothesis, which seems to fit in with the given facts and to bring them into a unity. The hypothesis holds as long as it works, and as long as no facts of the empirical world are in conflict with it. Every scientific hypothesis is verifiable, either directly or indirectly. It is directly verified when one crucial experiment confirms it. It is indirectly verified

when certain consequences following from it, and worked out deductively, are confirmed by observation. But how-so-ever the hypothesis may be verified, it remains a hypothesis. There is no such thing as *rational necessity* about it. It represents only a *probable truth*. Workability is its only test of truth. It may even rise above the status of a *theory* requiring justification, and be treated as an accepted fact of a higher order. But its suppositional character is never completely lost. The moment we go beyond the purely given, and generalise about it, we are in the field of interpretation and construction, which is the function of imagination. And imagination can never give us literal truth or truth that is theoretically perfect and complete. Seeing is never the same thing as imagining. All scientific knowledge, and in fact all knowledge of empirical fact, is thus theoretically imperfect. It satisfies only the pragmatic test of truth,—it works. It enables us to predict future events.

But if scientific knowledge is thus dubitable, and lacks the character of necessity, are the principles of thought underlying it indubitable? We have the principles of deductive reasoning called laws of thought. They are taken to be self-evidently true. But they can be criticised, and shown to be not quite so self-evident. Unless they are understood to be purely verbal, in which case they do not inform us about anything and do not constitute knowledge of any sort, their truth can be questioned. What do they state? Do they state a

truth or a procedural rule? If it is the former, it is open to criticism. *

There are also certain principles of inductive thought, such as the law of causality and the uniformity of nature. But their theoretical value is limited and does not go very far. They are not accepted as self-evident principles, but as principles that have to be provisionally accepted in order to organise our knowledge and to make prediction possible. It may be very difficult to replace them by another set of principles more strictly rational, and to that extent they may even be regarded as highly reasonable. If we doubt them, the alternative theses may be more difficult to defend or to justify. But that does not mean that they are theoretically indubitable, or that they are not open to the criticism of reason. They are in the end an expression of our *faith* in order and the rule of law in nature. But a faith must remain a faith. There can be no necessity about it. A faith is only justified by its working results, not by its theoretical purity and correctness.

It may here be said: But are there not certain principles of reason which underlie all scientific knowledge, and which are theoretically indubitable? They are not certain operational devices, but rational constituents of the real. Kant enunciated some of these principles, and called them *apriori*

* See my article "Limitations of logic,"—Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XXIV, No. 3.

synthetic propositions. Now we have to admit that scientific knowledge, and in fact all knowledge, presupposes certain *apriori* principles of thought or categories. They are in that sense valid of all sensible experience, which science seeks to interpret and reduce to law. But they are certainly open to criticism, if they are held as ultimately valid or valid for pure reason. There are in this sense no typically rational principles, not open to the self-criticism of reason.

Scientific knowledge reveals its inadequacy as soon as we begin to reflect upon it. We are obliged to transcend it and to negate it. We take recourse to the *pure logical form* of this knowledge, the *apriori* synthetic principles, as something more certain and theoretically sanctified. We now find, on reflection, that we have to negate the form as well.

Hegel tried to show the internal contradiction in every category of thought if it is taken as ultimately valid or valid of reality taken as a whole. We have to transcend every such category. His innovation was that the process of transcendence was not only necessary and rational, but also purposeful. It led on to higher and higher categories, till we reached a category which fully sustained the meaning of ultimate reality, and which was in its turn not open to the criticism of reason. So far however as this deduction of categories was concerned, it was a venture in thought of doubtful theoretical value. It had a fully hypothetical cha-

racter, and it had no imprint of necessity about it. It was experience that suggested the higher or the more inclusive category. The latter was not *literally deduced* from the form of the category or the categories preceding it. Deduction here is to be understood in a somewhat wide sense, as rational insight, which has elements of freedom in it; and freedom is opposed to reason. Hegel also failed to recognise that no category of thought could be anything but partial, and so inadequate to reality. There could be no form of thought which could arrogate to itself the place and the function of reality as such or of absolute reality. Thought was necessarily formal. It implied the distinction of matter and form. The former could not be deduced from the latter. Thus form was not only relative to matter which could not be deduced from it and necessarily went beyond it, but it was also relative to other forms. It was meaningful only in this relation. No *mere form* could therefore be really ultimate or all-inclusive. It was necessarily relative. This was a limitation implied in form as such. We have therefore to transcend the form; and we can only transcend it by going from it to reality. Reality alone could be adequate to itself, and so ultimate and not to be transcended. Or what is the same thing, Absolute Reality alone can be absolute, and not what is called a form or a category of thought, although elevated to the dignified name of an absolute form, the so-called Absolute Idea?

It would be absurd, for instance, to deduce every

detail of the world as a series of occurrences or as a historical process from the Absolute Idea. Even if we accept Hegel's contention that the world-history is an arena for the concrete display of the progressive role of the categories of reason, the actual occurrences cannot be deduced from any idea of reason whatsoever. The Absolute Idea, as idea, could not possibly include within itself the content which it informed, even if it could be proved (which is highly doubtful) that it included all the other categories of thought as moments of its life and therefore essentially partaking of its reality. The hierarchy of categories is quite artificial and arbitrary. The Absolute Idea is implied in those other categories only in so far as we have put it into them to start with, and only as we have accepted a metaphysical position which we want somehow to defend and to uphold. There is no literal deduction anywhere in the evolution of the higher categories. There is instead an effort of thought to *construct* a superior category at each stage, and finally one, which, verbally at least, it should be impossible to transcend. We have made up our mind on a metaphysic, and we want to justify it through a show of logic or what is called the inherent movement of reason. As a matter of fact, there is no such movement of reason, impelling us to reach out to the Absolute Idea. And even if there is this impelling force, there can be various forms of this deduction, which is more or less a free venture in thought. If the eye of reason can

alone see the truth, it can see it in very different ways, in accordance with the capacity of the person who sees. There is no such thing as an absolute objective Reason above, and apart from, the processes of reasoning of individuals; and the latter can take many different lines where free construction on the basis of experience is possible. Hegel has a metaphysic, namely the identity of thought with reality, and his logic is subservient to it. His logic is not superior to his metaphysic, and does not form its real basis. It is just the other way.

As with Hegel, so with other philosophers. While each philosopher argues, there is always a metaphysic in the background which determines the line of the argument. No philosopher ever argues from universally accepted principles and from universally accepted facts to universally accepted conclusions. It is the conclusions that really come first in the argument, although they may not be explicitly stated. In other words, the metaphysical position of a philosopher, *adopted without any reasoning,* is the basis of his reasoning. He appears to be arguing *towards* this position, while in fact he is arguing *from* it. The result is that one philosopher cannot refute another by mere argument. They start from different metaphysical presuppositions, and their logic is wholly dominated by these presuppositions. The arguments of one philosopher therefore appear in the eyes of another to have no relevance for the problems under discussion, and vice-versa. How can there be unani-

mity among different philosophers? How can one philosopher refute another or convince him of the error of his thought? The only way we can successfully meet a philosopher in argument is to accept his metaphysical position, draw out the implications of that position, show those implications to be inconsistent with his main stand, and thus make him see the self-contradiction involved in his views when they are analysed and clearly stated. No philosopher is prepared to accept a self-contradiction or to remain complacent in the face of it. Another way to meet a philosopher in argument is to set up a counter position, and to try to show that it is no less plausible, and that it can meet all the objections against it quite as successfully as any other position. What no one can show is that any particular position is *logically necessary* or indisputable. *There is no pure logic that can decide for us a true metaphysic.* Metaphysics comes first. Both the facts and the forms of reasoning come afterwards.

It may be argued that there are certain principles of logic which are accepted by all, and these can help us in arriving at a true metaphysic. There is, for instance, the principle of non-contradiction. With the aid of this principle, some philosophers have been able to formulate their metaphysical position, quite unerringly as they think. But can a purely formal principle, like the principle of non-contradiction, be of much use in getting at the concrete nature of reality? Hegel worked with the

principle of negation in order to get at the truth. Every category of thought was found to involve its own anti-thesis, and thus led to its own negation. But how was the contradiction between the thesis and the anti-thesis overcome? Hegel had recourse to synthesis, which was a *jump* in experience. We may not be able to stay in a self-contradiction. But how do we avoid it? Not in a logical way, but through an *extra-logical perception* of a more inclusive, and supposedly valid, category. The mere principle of non-contradiction decides nothing. It is itself negative, and has no positive content.

Bradley made even greater use of the principle of non-contradiction, and he carried the principle to every category of thought known to us. He showed that there was no category which was really free from self-contradiction. But how did he get over the contradiction? He got over it in quite an arbitrary way. He propounded a new thesis, according to which, thought itself was to be transcended in a new form of experience which was supra-rational, and almost mystical. We have no analogy of it in our present experience. The analogy of feeling does not carry us far; for feeling is an instrument of value, not of cognition. Cognition is impossible without thought in some sense. The truth is that our knowledge of Bradley's Absolute is purely verbal. We know it as the *Whole* or as the *Absolute.* These are mere words to us. We reconstruct their meaning on the basis of the wholes that we know, and that are essentially rela-

tive and finite. But that meaning does not amount to knowledge. It is at best negative. We know the Absolute as what is not relative and what is not partial. But we do not know the Absolute *as such.* We have no experience of it; and no way is indicated of getting at the experience. We have merely a conception; and the conception itself is fully unintelligible. How can a whole be constructed out of a manifold of appearances without relations of any kind? And how can such a whole, inclusive of *content,* be other than a *determinate whole,* which is a contradiction in terms! For every determination excludes something. Bradley's Absolute has no logical value of any kind. It is not only mystical and mysterious, but a challenge to reason, of which so much is made by him. We can conclude that no principle of reason can help us out of our difficulties, or enable us to decide our metaphysics. It is just the other way. Our metaphysics determines our logic.

It may be said: A rational metaphysic can be justified in another way. We have common experience and certain facts of this experience accepted by all. Why can we not construct a system of concepts which will systematise all these facts (or even let us say rationalize them), and at the same time give us a synoptic view of reality as a whole? Such a system of concepts could be agreed upon by all men of reason and could be regarded as a *rational system.*

But, firstly, what is common experience? Different people may give very different interpretations of this experience, so that the very facts known in it may have a different colour put upon them. There are no facts prior to interpretation. Thus an agreed set of facts is not possible in philosophy. Interpretation is all-important for the determination of facts that we are supposed to know; and interpretation is the life-breath of philosophical thinking. We may have the same experience, but we all analyse it and interpret it differently. Thus before the construction of a system of concepts can begin, we require a philosophy which can give the right analysis of our experience, and so the right set of facts. In other words, we require a philosophy before we have the further philosophical problem of constructing a system of concepts.

Secondly, *what is the method* of constructing a system of concepts which will do justice to all the facts of experience? Is there any logical or foolproof method, or are we left to conjecture, imagination and expediency in this matter? If it is the latter, every philosopher can have a different set of concepts for rationalising his experience, and he will have no less right to the truth than any other philosopher. The method of philosophy will have nothing to distinguish it from the method of science, namely the method of trial and error, and it will be logically less rigid in the bargain.

Thirdly,—and this is why it will be logically less rigid,—while there is a method of verifying a scientific hypothesis through a crucial experiment or a crucial observation under regulated conditions, there is no possibility of verification of the truth of a philosophical concept or a system of concepts. For just the same set of supposed facts is differently understood in the light of different systems, and so taken to verify just the very opposite theses. The same set of facts, for instance, can be taken to justify both realism and idealism, materialism and spiritualism, freedom and necessity, etc. Thus an empirical scientific hypothesis is a very different thing from a non-empirical and all-inclusive philosophical hypothesis. There is no limitation of facts upon the latter, while there is such a limitation upon the former accepted by the consensus of scientific opinion. A rational metaphysic thus seems an airy thing. Any and every metaphysic can be said to be rationally justified by its own logic. There is not one logic, but as many logics as there are metaphysical systems.

But did not Kant show the way to a scientific or rational metaphysic? If we can show the rational limitations of our knowledge, we can at least cease to ask meaningless and impossible questions. Reason can determine its own limitations through reflection upon its own functions and activities. If we know these limitations, we know the limitations of all our rational knowledge. Faith may reinforce this knowledge, and thus make

amends for its limitations. But we should no more have any problem about the knowledge of a super-sensible or metaphysical reality, such as God or the soul. This is all the rational metaphysics, though it is purely negative in character, that is possible to us. We can set it down as quite a rational proposition that we cannot know super-sensible reality, that there are certain rational propositions (*apriori* synthetic) implied by all our knowledge, and lastly that these rational propositions are incontrovertible, being necessary and universal. *We have thus knowledge of the rational form; and this is all the metaphysical knowledge that we can boast of.*

Let it be so. But does not the self-criticism of reason imply much more than reason,—in fact, a point of view above reason, and not determined by it? Reason cannot criticise itself without transcending itself,—and in fact without a metaphysic that sets limits to reason itself. How otherwise are we to know that there are things-in-themselves that transcend our sensibility and our understanding? How are we to know that all our knowledge relates to phenomena, not to noumena? We have here a metaphysic pre-supposed by reason and the self-criticism of reason,—not arrived at *through reason,* which is confined to the phenomenal world. And we have a metaphysical problem,—to which we cannot shut our eyes,—as to the nature of the things-in-themselves and the knowledge that will be appropriate to them. There is no logic that will

solve this problem. For the stand-point of metaphysics is a-logical. It is presupposed by every logic. Or in other words, we have a metaphysic before we have a logic to justify it. *A rational metaphysic, in a literal sense, is nowhere to be found, and is an impossibility.*

The only useful work that logic can do in the field of philosophy is *analysis*. It is not the business of logic to construct a rational system of concepts. No such system can be sacrosanct or free from criticism. It will be essentially a dogmatic system. It may have a certain intellectual value in reducing the complexity of phenomena to a few simple, but fundamental, propositions, called first principles. But the latter cannot bear criticism. They are accepted, because they make for simplicity and a certain amount of intelligibility in our understanding of things. But they always pose a new problem,—the problem of their truth and of their own inherent intelligibility and rationality. Metaphysics as a study of first principles rationally arrived at is doomed to failure. There are no First Principles. There is only Reality, first and last.

The right procedure for logic, as we said, is analysis of the so-called fundamental concepts, in order to reveal their partiality and their inherent inconsistency. This analysis tends to bring out the inherent weakness of every metaphysical system. The value of any such system is merely aesthetic. We are pleased with it as we are pleased with any artistic creation of our own. It is not the truth

that we know, but the rational form in which *we* dress the truth. We must realize,—and that logically,—that truth transcends the form. It cannot be reduced to a *formula,* however comprehensive in scope.

The true role of logic in metaphysics is in this sense purely negative. It itself accepts nothing,—not even the rules of its own procedure, which may themselves be open to criticism. It confronts the speculative or system-building metaphysician with a predicament of his own creation. What he accepts is shown to him to involve a situation which he himself cannot accept. It is he, for instance, who accepts the principle of non-contradiction; and in view of that principle, he is made to realize that he cannot hold a position which involves a self-contradiction. In other words, the only argument that will convince him and dislodge him is what is called in logical parlance *"reductio ad absurdum."*

Logic, however, need not be wholly negative. It may also be elucidatory. If there is any such thing as metaphysical truth which can be known, it must be found in our present experience. We have no problem about any super-sensible experience or any experience which we do not at present possess. All our problems relate to our experience as it is, not to any possible future experience which we necessarily construct on the basis, and on the pattern, of our present experience. Metaphysical truth must be truth about this experience. In other words, our present experience has a signi-

ficance which goes beyond it, and which we do not at present understand. Logic can, and must, elucidate this truth; and it can only elucidate it through an analysis of our experience.

What is it to analyse experience? Is it to reduce experience to the simplest propositions, about which we can all agree. Such analysis can lead nowhere. The only propositions about which we all agree are common-sense propositions based upon our common experience of a world. These propositions are made and understood by all. But is common-sense the limit of our intelligibility, or the beginning of error, confusion and misunderstanding? If there is no misunderstanding in common-sense, we have no philosophical problem or problem of reflection. It is only when a conflict arises in our beliefs based on common-sense that we have a new kind of problem or a reflective problem. How is the conflict to be resolved? It can only be resolved through a logical analysis of our experience.

The form of the analysis is dictated by the form of the question. How does the question arise? What are the basic beliefs which are in conflict in any particular case? To take an instance, why do we ask whether physical objects exist or not? Common-sense accepts them; and so does our language which is based upon common-sense. When we say, "here is an apple", everybody understands the same thing by an apple and by the sentence as a whole. We all agree in calling the apple a phy-

sical thing. Then why the question, whether physical things exist or not? It is because when we take something to be a physical thing, and that thing by common consent proves to be only an idea in our mind (as in erroneous knowledge), we have a question whether there is an experience of a physical thing *as such* not to be confounded with a possible idea in our mind. Unless we can demarcate clearly one experience from another in this respect, the physical thing may verily look like an idea; and there will be no logical barrier to our calling it an idea only. If it were merely a case of physical things being outside in physical space and ideas being in the mind, it would be a simple enough affair. We know things outside sensibly, we do not know ideas sensibly. Conversely, we know ideas directly, or let us say through introspection,—we do not know things thus. But it is not quite so simple. For there are those cases where things are, to all appearance, sensibly perceived, but which are really not sensibly perceived, but which are conceived or imagined by the mind. The status of these things is that of ideas only, although unlike the latter, they may appear to be outside and perceived sensibly.

The analysis of experience is thus not in the air. It is a probe applied to experience, in order to resolve an apparent contradiction in it, or rather in our beliefs based upon it. What do we really experience? Do we experience what is real or what is not? How is one experience different from

another of the same logical type, but of different metaphysical status by common consent? After all we cannot get away from experience, and the different types with which it presents us. Thus, to analyse experience is to reduce it to those types about which we are unanimously agreed. *This* experience looks like *that*, and about *that experience* we have no question and no disagreement. Is not then the conflict resolved, and with it the problem of metaphysical or ultimate truth? The agreed type is our measure of truth. We have no problem about it. The belief based upon it is the unchallenged, and therefore the right, belief, and it must take precedence over any other belief which goes counter to it but which is based on the same internal testimony of experience or mode of knowing. If the snake which I see with my eyes and without any mental reservation is illusory, why not the rope too which I see just in the same way? It would not do to amend this expression by saying, "the snake which I *appear* to see with my eyes;" and then to argue that such a snake cannot be identical with "the snake which I *actually* see with my eyes," or that an illusory snake is only a snake which I *appear* to see with my eyes as against the rope which I *actually* see with my eyes. *When* I am *in error*, I am not conscious of the above-mentioned distinction. If I were conscious of it, I should not be in error. It is no use then to be wise after the event, and to import the language of wisdom when we are actually in error

and in the wrong. We do not say, when we are supposed to perceive the illusory snake, "this *appears* a snake", but only "this *is* a snake." Appropriately, we describe our experience by saying, "we perceive a snake." And the matter should end there. It is only when we later recognise our error that we amend the expression by saying, "we only *appeared* to perceive a snake." But this amendment is wholly irrelevant in determining the *logical type* of our original experience. It is experience of a supposed physical object like any other such experience. There is no difference. It is this absence of difference that resolves the problem for us, and assimilates the supposed veridical experience of a physical object to one that is not veridical. We are agreed about the latter, and have no question about it. We are not agreed about the former, except that it is of the same logical type.

But what after all do we mean by a "non-veridical experience of a physical object"? Does it not mean that there can be a veridical as well as a non-veridical experience of a physical object? We have a meaning for "physical object", and this can only be based upon *some* experience of it which is true to it. Even in denying the reality of a physical object, we must *know* what we are denying. Or in other words, we must know a physical object before we can make the statement, "there is no physical object." In fact, this is what we actually do when we deny the reality of a *particular* physical object. When we deny the reality of the

snake, we affirm the reality of the rope, the knowledge of which cancels the knowledge of the snake. It is not *all* physical objects that are illusory. If one is illusory, another is real in its place. There is no sense in denying physical objects as such, or making the unlimited statement "there are no physical objects,—there are only ideas." The very fact of our denial goes against us.

This argument appears plausible, but is logically indefensible. If there is a *legitimate question* about the reality of any and every physical object, we have to justify *some* knowledge of a physical object which *is* veridical in order to remove the question and to resolve it. But that is the whole point. What experience of a physical object *is veridical?* How do we distinguish it in logical form from a known non-veridical experience? All that we can say is that the so-called veridical experience is one which has not so far been cancelled. But this is not a logical argument. We rely more on the uncertain and fortuitous factor of time than upon the logical type. An experience which has not been so far cancelled is not on that account *uncancellable. Its form always remains open to cancellation. Logically therefore it is as good as cancelled.* We do not deny *all knowledge* of physical objects. We only deny all *veridical knowledge* of physical objects and the consequences that are supposed to follow from that position. But if there is *no* veridical knowledge of a so-called physical object, the status of any such object is the

status of all those objects which figure in an illusion. An illusion requires to be cancelled. There is always an element of truth in it (the truth of the ground), which must turn against the illusion and dissipate it. An illusion thus contains within itself the seed of its own cancellation. But the real cancellation cannot come in the form which is itself illusory, and which therefore belongs to the same logical type of objects. We can well have a series of illusions, in which the later cancels the earlier. But that does not mean that the cancelling illusion is no illusion. It only means that the real or the final cancellation is *not yet.* That can only come through a knowledge of the ground which is not itself open to cancellation, and which therefore belongs to a different and higher logical type. The analysis of experience which logic undertakes must be an analysis of types only; and the ultimate types will be those types about the significance of which we are all agreed, and which do not confuse us by contrary interpretations. This is how experience can be interpreted philosophically, and made to reveal its true meta-physical significance. Or what is the same thing, there are levels of experience, and it is the business of logic to explicate them.

Logic has a positive role in philosophy only in the interest of a higher truth which it elucidates. This truth gives the orientation to logic. Logic is subsidiary to it. It is merely an instrument of explication and elucidation. It is not itself a

method of rational knowledge about a super-sensible reality. Any knowledge about reality can only be obtained through a recognised method of knowledge called *pramāṇa.* Inference, as used in science, is such a method. It is called *anūmāna.* This method is useless in philosophy. We cannot know super-sensible reality or metaphysical truth through inference. We cannot know it through any form of *purely logical thinking* or *tarka;* and when we suppose we do, we are really having recourse to imagination, or to circular reasoning. We construct a system of concepts in imagination, and call it logic. It is nothing of the kind. Genuine logic must be preceded by, and based upon, actual knowledge obtained through a recognised source of knowledge called *pramāṇa.* In philosophy, the *pramāṇa* can be no other than a non-empirical source of knowledge called *srūti* or the revealed word. The truth is known directly and intuitively through this revelation. Logic explicates it in the context of our ordinary experience. It dissipates the doubts and the contradictions, and thus makes truth more evident and more efficacious than ever. It does not adumbrate it by the sheer force of its own rules and without any aid from revelation.

Metaphysical truth is truth about our present experience. As such, it is implied by it. It is present in our knowledge of things, and in all the questions of reflection to which this knowledge gives rise. In this way, it impels us on to its own realization. It is not reached from below or

through graded generalisations, on the pattern of scientific knowledge. It descends from above as a complete revelation. This truth is in the background of all our questionings, contradictions and confusions. We apparently proceed from the latter to the former. In point of fact, it is just the other way. The truth draws us through error and ignorance to itself. We know it implicitly to begin with. When the confusions are removed, we recognize it explicitly, and then we are said to know it truly. It is a re-discovery of what we already in a sense know, and what is, quite unconsciously to ourselves, always drawing us to itself. It is not a creation of our thought, which is all that we understand by speculative philosophy. As against this conception which cannot be justified in terms of genuine knowledge, we ought to give preference to the conception of *adhyātmic Vidyā,* which is the conception of knowing the already known, or the re-discovery of what is already in our possession and open to a trained and enlightened inspection. What is needed is a shift in our attention, not a constructive effort of thought to reach out to the unknown.

We conclude that metaphysical knowledge comes first, and logic afterwards. The methods of logic have to be adapted to the nature of the problems that it is called upon to tackle. There is nothing fixed or unquestioned about these methods. They are just the methods that work, because they resolve the problem in hand. When we cease to

ask questions, we cease to have a use for logic. The questions of science demand one kind of logic, the questions of philosophy another. In philosophy itself, the form of reasoning has to be adapted to the nature of the question. Thus there is no logic which all can, and must, accept. It is a subsidiary instrument of truth, that resolves our questions as they arise and in the way they arise, but does not tell us what truth itself is.

CHAPTER VI

Our Knowledge of Metaphysical Reality

We have tried to know something of the logical form. That however presupposed knowledge of metaphysical reality. The next question is, how do we know this reality? It is evident that we do not know this reality through any kind of abstract reasoning, or through logic. We must have a *direct experience* of it, or an intuition of it. That alone has cognitive value in the end. Reason is not intuitive, and it does not provide us with a direct method of knowledge.

Metaphysical knowledge belongs to a higher order. We criticise scientific knowledge as being hypothetical, progressive and endless. *Literal truth* is here unattainable. It is working truth only, that we manage to get at. When we reject scientific knowledge as less than knowledge in the strict sense, and so negate it, we are obliged to accept knowledge of the pure logical form, which determines scientific knowledge, as more certain or undeniable. We have this knowledge *more directly*, through reflection on the very processes of knowing. We do not therefore negate knowledge of the categories or of the principles of the understanding, when we negate scientific knowledge as merely empirical. But we cannot stop with this knowledge either. We are

obliged to criticise it too. It is knowledge of the rational form or the rational content of our experience. This rational form does not enter into or determine reality *as such,* but only our knowledge of it, and so the phenomenal object. It has its limitations. We are conscious of these limitations. Reality goes beyond the form. This reality is not determined by the categories. It is a kind of pure metaphysical object. It sets a limit to our knowledge of the categories, and is implied by this knowledge. It represents a higher level of objectivity and so of reality. We negate the form as inadequate to reality, but accept the reality itself as what is above the form, and as what makes us conscious of the limitation of the form. Thus empirical object gives place to the logical object; and the logical object gives place to the pure metaphysical object.

What now do we know of the pure object or the thing-in-itself? It is evident that the moment we *criticise* our empirical knowledge and know its limitations, we go beyond it and accept the reality of the non-empirical, of which the empirical reality is only an appearance constructed by our understanding. This non-empirical reality is necessarily super-sensible and super-rational. Beyond this we can say nothing about it. Our knowledge of it is more or less negative in character. We know what the metaphysical object *is not.* We do not know what it exactly *is.* But we cannot rest in a negation. If there is reality, it must have a nature of its own or a positive character. The only way

to get at this character is to rely upon a source of knowledge which goes beyond our sensibility and our reason. It is not human reason, but a superhuman revelation that alone can give positive knowledge of metaphysical reality. What this reality is only the revealed word or the scripture can say. If we have no use for the scripture or a non-rational source of knowledge, we have a standing problem which we cannot face and cannot resolve. It is not the attitude of a truth-seeker. Agnosticism is not only uncongenial to him, but it is also illogical. If we *know* that there is reality, we cannot disclaim all knowledge of it, nor can we deny the possibility of rendering our knowledge adequate to it.

Reality is the correlate of knowledge. It is that which is known. We start with knowledge; and it is only in knowledge that we have a meaning for reality. Apart from, and outside of, knowledge, being and non-being are indistinguishable to us. They make no difference to our understanding. It is the possibility of knowledge that distinguishes being from non-being. One cannot therefore reasonably stay in agnosticism as the final attitude to reality. Any kind of ignorance of reality is a *human limitation* which demands to be removed and rejected. Ignorance of metaphysical reality has got therefore to be removed by a knowledge appropriate to that reality. It must be a higher kind of knowledge.

It may be admitted, for the sake of argument, that we have no direct intuition of metaphysical

reality as such, comparable with our sensible intuition of physical reality. But can we deny *all experience* of non-physical reality? It will be generally admitted that religious experience is a common enough experience, and further that this experience is initiated through some kind of revelation from above. This revelation may come to us through the report of a person considered an adept in the matter; but in the end it comes from the scripture or the revealed word called *ṣabda*. We *hear* the truth (*ṣrûti*). When all other methods of knowledge fail us in respect of metaphysical reality, scripture does not fail us. We have faith in the scripture. This faith determines the form of our religious experience; and that in turn determines for us the positive nature of metaphysical reality.

Metaphysical reality is thus differently interpreted in accordance with the terms of our varying religious experience. All men do not accept the same scripture. Neither do all men have the same identical religious experience. The different forms of this experience determine the differences of meaning and of content of metaphysical reality. Those who repudiate all religious experience as something unworthy of a philosopher's serious attention can have no positive metaphysics, if they can have any metaphysics at all. What is wrong with the sceptic is not his logical reasoning, which appears quite plausible on the basis of the experience admitted by him, but his non-admission of religious experience as a genuine experience of

a super-sensible reality. "No religion, no metaphysics" is the motto; for *religion alone gives a positive content to metaphysical reality*. What we cannot see with our eyes, we yet know in our hearts.

Religious experience is not a negative experience, or an experience of something that *might be* but that we can never know as what really *is*. It is eminently positive. We have *no doubt* of the reality of that which we experience. Only it is invested with different sets of essential and non-essential characters. The former relate to what it is *in itself*, and the latter relate to *how it is related* to the world of our common experience. But inspite of these differences of idea, there is a fundamental agreement about the essential nature of the object of religious experience. What we experience is some kind of *spiritual reality* as opposed to physical reality. Secondly, this spiritual reality is not unrelated to the physical reality. It encompasses the latter, and underlies it. It is thus greater than the physical, and omni-present in it. It is truly *metaphysical*. Thirdly, while the spiritual reality cannot be perceived or known in the ordinary way, it is nevertheless experienced as an over-soul; it is directly apprehended by the individual in communion. The over-soul is the Great Soul in every way. It may be called in this sense *param-ātman*. It is the only metaphysical reality, if there is one; and we know it for what it is only in religious experience.

The physical object, in so far as it is determinate, involves negation in its very nature. It is relative to what goes beyond it. It has hardly *any* positive character. It cannot be the *reality*, which must have a *svarûpa* or *own nature*. When we negate the physical object, we come to the pure object which has none of the empirical characters of the former. But if it has none of these characters, what is it *in itself?* It cannot be without a nature or a pure negation. It must have a *svarûpa*. What is this *svarûpa?* We must not only negate all empirical characters of the *thing-in-itself,* but we must also negate the negation, which is equally empirical. This is only possible through a positive experience. Religious experience is the answer.

We are here (i.e., in religious experience) in direct contact with reality as object. But the object is no longer physical. We cannot describe it in the language of sense or in any language touched by sensible experience. Indeed, imagination is not wholly ruled out. Where there is object *of any kind,* imagination has a part to play in representing it. But the function of imagination in religious experience is wholly symbolic. What we represent as object merely symbolises a reality which is nonsensible and essentially spiritual. It is never *this* to us. What is *this* to us, in the form of a body or an image, is only the outer shell or the embodiment of the spirit within. But while the reality thus *transcends* all sensuous contact, it is known *more intimately* than what is a possible object of sen-

suous contact. In the latter case, thought intervenes and mediates our knowledge of the object. Reality is thus separated from the grasp of our knowledge by the constructions of thought, and rendered unknowable as it is *in itself*. We cannot possibly establish any intimate or immediate contact with it. We are estranged from it, and stand outside the sanctum.

This cannot be said of the spiritual reality contacted in religious experience. Here too we may be said to have an attitude of objectivity. We cannot help equating reality with objectivity. But the object is literally *transcendent*. It cannot be presented or represented in thought. It can only be symbolised by thought; and it is symbolised with the aid of images. It may be some definite image, or one that is more or less tenuous and that has only very indefinite outlines in space and time. The spiritual reality, or let us say God, is here, there and everywhere. But when we thus describe it, we are conscious of the symbolic character of our description. Nothing really in space or in time, nothing really spatio-temporal, can be called God. But what is important in religious experience is not the symbol, but what the latter symbolises. What it symbolises is not a reality which we can know from the outside, in part only, and with our senses. We know it from the inside, for what it is, as an *integral whole*. The mystery about it is, to a large extent, dissipated; for the reality reveals itself in what is called the communion of the spirit. God, if

experienced at all, is the nearest thing, the most intimate thing, and the whole thing. We cannot keep Him away or separate Him from ourselves by any barriers of our understanding. We know Him first, and then we think about Him. Our thinkings are various, not so our knowledge. What we think about Him is only symbolic. The reality tends to overflow the symbol, confound the understanding, and come nearer to us than our understanding would have us think. Thought cannot obstruct; for it is an experience above thought, using thought only as a means for speaking and communicating. Or what is the same thing, thought is not a determinant of reality here, but only a tool for symbolising it.

This is the fundamental nature of all religious communion. Reality delivers itself to us as essentially *indescribable*. It is too great and too intimate for description. It overflows the symbol, and fills the heart and all our sensibilities. It keeps coming nearer to us, till it is as near as our very self and indistinguishable from it. We cannot say what is God and what is our self. The line of demarcation is always missing. The individual self and the higher self do not appear to be in any kind of external relation. It is a union more intimate than any we can know or describe. Even if we try to keep them apart, and regard God as more than our self or as the over-soul, it is nevertheless our higher self or our truer self. So that we are obliged to say that in God lies our true being. We move, act and

have our being in God. Can anything be more intimate and more immediate than God? He takes us out of our littleness and our separateness, and makes us partners of His infinite greatness.

We have described the object of religious experience as spirit or as over-soul. This poses a problem. What exactly *is* our knowledge of *spiritual reality* or the *over-soul?* Are not these very vague terms? Is not religious experience itself uncertain and nebulous? At best, it is a way of personal feeling; at worst, it is a trick of the imagination. Where *all* our language is symbolic, it is difficult to say what exactly it symbolises. The mystics who claim to be the high priests of truth in this sphere do not speak the same language. They couch their experience, whatever it is, in the language of their own particular cult or sect. We are therefore obliged to conclude that they imagine an experience where there is no real experience having any theoretical value. An experience has a theoretical value when it is a *common experience,* which can be described in *identical terms,* and which can therefore be *communicated* without loss of meaning or any perversion of it. Religious experience, even if it is admitted to be universal, is too personal, fluid, uncertain and varied to make this possible. How can we depend upon it for the knowledge of the truth? And the mystics themselves, high-strung mentally, are the least reliable persons for this great purpose.

We now contend that religious experience is a common enough experience. To the extent that some people do not have this experience, they are not fully human with all the normal faculties of human beings. They lack a faculty, just as a blind man lacks the faculty of seeing. They are accordingly precluded from all *genuine metaphysical knowledge*. All objections against the possibility of this knowledge are in the end traceable to the lack of religious experience, which is a species of privation or blindness.

But what exactly is the object of this experience? Briefly speaking, it is spirit, conceived on the analogy of the human spirit, soul or self. The object of the experience is not an impersonal law or an impersonal stuff. One may have faith in a supernatural law or the law of *dharma* ruling the destiny of all creatures. Buddhism and *Pûrva-mimaṁsā* are religions of this type. But primitive Buddhism was supplemented, and to a large extent supplanted, by *mahāyānism,* which deified Buddha, the Person. And *Pûrva-mimaṁsā* has never been regarded as a complete religion, but only as a preliminary to *uttara-mimaṁsa*. The truth is that we have *no experience* of an impersonal and super-natural law. We accept the law on mere authority. The law is not something which we can see through any *faculty* in us, or with which we can have any *personal contact* or communion. The law may bring harmony within our lives, and inspire in us the awe of a super-sensible order of things going beyond any human or

man-made order, but it is not a fit object of religious experience.

If the object of the religious experience is a distant God, sitting in Heaven, there is a possibility of genuine doubt about the reality of this God, and about the validity of the experience of which He is said to be the object. But if it is possible to *love* a distant God that is never seen or known in any other way, it is also possible to conceive that the distant God is not quite so distant after all. Love bridges the gulf. It removes all distance, and makes the infinitely distant infinitely near to us. Hence God is called love. If we do not love God, we have no experience of God, however near He might be. Indeed, it is often said that to see God is to love Him. But how are we to *see* Him? Have we any faculty of seeing the super-sensible and the infinite? Evidently, we have none, *apart from love.* Religious experience therefore reverses the sequence. To love God is to bring God near, and to establish an intimate personal contact with Him, which is as good a seeing of God as it is given to human beings to see Him. For unlike sense-perception and the like, love knows no doubts. We simply cannot love what we believe might not exist. Hence love is its own reward. It gets what it gives. Love knows no defeat and no deceit. To love God is to be assured of the existence of God,—in fact, to see God.

The object of religious experience is thus necessarily a person. We can only love a person. For love involves a two-way traffic. There is an out-

going feeling, and there is an immediate response to this feeling. This is called communion. We can have communion only with a responsive mind or person. The person may be endowed with different sets of qualities and relations. But in all cases, He is greater than we, and is the very culmination of power, knowledge, immediacy and joy. He is the Ideal Person in every way. We thus expand Deism into Theism, and Theism into Pantheism, and Pantheism into Advaitism or Absolutism. These are the natural stages and levels of religious experience, and they provide the key, in the last analysis, to the nature of metaphysical reality.

Religious experience is evidently based upon personal feeling of some kind. It may be fear; and when we fear, we fear we know not what. We are ignorant of the exact nature and of the powers of that which we fear. It is often the Great Indefinite. In its highest form, religious experience is based on love. But love too does not appear to have any theoretical value. We cannot define exactly what we love. We seem drawn by what we cannot comprehend. Often we imagine excellences in the object of our love that are not really there. Love may be blind, and love may be mistaken. It is not the case that we first know and then we love. Love is a law unto itself. It cannot be a substitute for knowledge. How can we base philosophy on personal feeling of one kind or another? Feeling can solve no theoretical problem.

We now contend that although feeling may be exaggerated through imagination, it has nevertheless an object with which direct relations are possible. Religious feeling does have an object, the reality of which is not doubted at that level. There is no uncertainty about the existence of the object that inspires religious awe or love in us. We feel the object, and are united with the object. Only we cannot stop with the feeling. The feeling offers a problem,—the theoretical problem of a higher knowledge. Feeling must culminate in knowledge; for knowledge alone can justify feeling. In the absence of this knowledge, there are bound to be marginal doubts and questions which react upon our feeling of love, and detract from its intensity and whole-heartedness. When love is supplemented by knowledge, it achieves its proper fruition. We then get the highest form of love which is *grounded in knowledge.* To see is to love. Knowledge is joy. Such love and such joy alone are unlimited; for they are not limited by any ignorance of reality. There is a demand by the highest form of purely religious consciousness to transform itself into knowledge or a direct awareness of the truth.

But how is this possible? Can we know what we love to begin with? The object of love, we said, is the over-soul. To know the over-soul, we must know the soul; for it is on the analogy of the latter that we conceive the former. The individual soul may be only an image or a *pritibiṁba.* But it is in the *pritibiṁba* alone that we can see the

biṁba or the unreflected reality. It is not given to us to view the unreflected reality in its nakedness in the state of our empirical existence. It is too transcendent or too resplendent for the latter. In our empirical existence, we only know the image or the reflected reality called the individual soul or self. This is our only idea of what is called spiritual being. It is in the individual soul accordingly that we primarily know the reality of the spirit. Our next question then is, what is our knowledge of the soul or the self. This takes us straight to the philosophy of the spirit.

CHAPTER VII

Our Knowledge of Spirit

Knowledge of spirit in religious consciousness is vague, undefined and inadequate, because religious experience is not explicitly cognitive. It starts with faith and ends in love. Accordingly, it offers a problem to theoretical consciousness. We need to go beyond it to a clearer knowledge of the reality of the spirit. The advantage of the religious consciousness is that it is fairly common, that it puts us into direct contact with the infinitely great, that it makes a departure from the normal or the empirical sources of knowledge, and that it is initiated exclusively by a revelation from above, which carries more authority than any empirical source of knowledge. Its disadvantage is that it is not fully self-conscious, since it leaves little scope to reason and for the satisfaction of reason. It is a feeling-apprehension of the Infinite, without a cognitive realization of the same. All questions that arise at this level are laid at rest through an overpowering *sense* of the Infinite rather than through an internal resolution of those questions through *knowledge*. Religion thus naturally leads to philosophy.

Our knowledge of the spirit, whatever it is, does not require us to have recourse to the scriptural revelation. We have quite a normal aware-

ness of our own individual selfs comparable to our awareness of physical objects. As we have a meaning for "this", so we have a meaning for "I." A person who uses the term "I" is understood by all hearers to refer to his own self, which is quite distinct from the selfs of the hearers designated by the term "you". *If the spirit means anything to us, it primarily means the "speaking I"*. It is this "I" that gives meaning to "this"; for *this* is something *to me* only. It is this "I" again that gives meaning to "you"; for the term *you* stands for the person or persons spoken to,—no *speaking I*, no *you*.

This speaking I, so fundamental to all objects, reveals its whole self for what it is, without reserving any part or aspect of its being. It is a complete meaning in itself. It reveals itself as the speaking subject that is inclusive of the speaking and absolutely distinct from every form of objectivity. It can never therefore be confused with *this* or with *you*, at least consciously. It is essentially non-objective, and self-revealing as that.

The speaking I is also *unique*. It stands for one and one entity only, namely the speaker. It is not the name of a *class* of things. For there is only one entity in the class. Only one man is the speaker, and all the other entities, present or absent, are *you* to him. He constitutes in this sense the centre of a whole world. He is the one centre, and all the rest of the world is a mere circumference, or something revolving around him. There may be many different speakers at different places

or at different times; but each constitutes a cosmos unto himself; for no other individual can share his central position. This uniqueness of the spiritual being of the individual is brought out by saying that the speaking "I" does not stand for any *socialised object,* or an object that is common to many individuals and that can be apprehended as *this.* Every-one understands the "I" to mean something unique, a real whole without parts, and quite distinct from *this.*

The "I" is understood to have the *same meaning* both for the speaker as well as for the hearer. That is the essence of all meaning. It must be common. But what exactly is this meaning? It would be wrong to say that the speaker knows himself as an "I" having the quality of I-ness, or as a "self" having the quality of self-hood. Indeed, we are supposed to know the self in self-consciousness, in which the self is both the subject and the object. But self-consciousness is in principle an object-consciousness; and we have already said that the "I", which constitutes my individual self, is distinct from, and absolutely opposed to, every kind of object. I am never *this.* How can the object of self-consciousness then be *identical with* the conscious self or the true subject? But if that is so, we cannot claim to know the self as object at all; and since it is no kind of object, it is *not literally known.* All that we can say is that we *speak* the self, never *know* it. Or what is the same thing, the self is *spoken* (*aparokṣa-vyavahāra-yogyatvam*),

never *spoken about*. Thus the self is certainly a significant entity. It is *meant* and *spoken*. But it is *not known* in the objective attitude (*ajñāté sati*).

A question naturally arises: If the self is not known as object, is it known in some other way? If we say that we have no knowledge of the self, how can we have any meaning for the spoken word "I"? All meaning is meaning within knowledge only. We can only mean what we can know. If "I" has a meaning, we must know the "I". But if it is no kind of object, how can we know? We must therefore suppose that it is some kind of object. Alternatively, the spoken word "I" has no meaning.

We admit the force of this argument; and must therefore admit that the "I" is not absolutely or wholly non-object. What is object of no kind cannot be meant by us or even spoken significantly. It is as good as nothing to us. The self must therefore be admitted to be known as object of some kind. It is a mixed kind of object. We have no two intuitions of the self,—an intuition of the self as object, and another intuition of the self as non-object. We have only one intuition of the self,—the intuition of "I" as opposed to the intuition of not-*I* or *this*. But if such is the case, a new form of objectivity emerges in our consciousness,—something, that is no object of any kind *in itself* and has to be distinguished from every form of object as absolutely opposed to it, has yet assumed a fictitious objectivity in our consciousness through in-

volvement with what is truly and really an object only. What objectivity therefore the self possesses in our consciousness is derived from its being confused or falsely identified with what is not-self. Thus the self is both object and not-object, both known and not-known. But its true nature consists not in its objectivity, but in its non-objectivity. If it is claimed to be known, it is known through a species of ignorance or error. We have a meaning for "I"; but this meaning appears to overflow the word, which thus becomes symbolic only. It is symbolic of a greater reality, the true Self, which cannot be literally meant.

This raises another problem: Is there really an entity, a greater Self, behind what we know as *I*, and of which the *I* is a symbol? The *I* that we know is something momentary. It arises with a mental act and disappears with it. The self is thus not a single abiding entity. It constitutes a series of entities, which follow each other, and which have nothing in common except the name. I see, I hear, I think, etc. are all different *I-s*. But if that is so, and if there is nothing behind them, which we can detect or find by inspection, there may be many different selfs, but no single self *deserving to be called by that name*. For the self is supposed to be self-identical and enduring through the succeeding acts of consciousness. It is supposed to bring *unity* to mental life. It is supposed to have both depth and extension. The passing "I" has no such cha-

racter, and no entity hidden behind it that we can know. There is accordingly no self worth the name.

All that this argument really proves is however just the contrary of what it is intended to prove. It really proves not that the self is momentary, but only that the self-form, or the *ahaṁākāra*, i.e. the *I*, which we apprehend as momentary, is not the real self. But that is also our contention. It was the contention of Buddhism too. The momentary is essentially objective, and therefore it is of the nature of the not-self (*un-atta*). The matter however does not stop there. The momentary is not self-revealing. No object is ever self-revealing. It requires to be revealed by an intelligent self. Can this intelligent self however be another momentary event which succeeds the first? That too is impossible. There is no co-presence of the two. And further, the problem is merely shifted to the later event; for that too requires to be revealed, being object. In other words, that which reveals or the real intelligent self must be no object; and it must not therefore be momentary. It is because the real self never comes forward and is never an object, that we are unable to detect it. We can only detect what presents itself to our objective view. But that is just the wrong way to seek to know the self. The real self is always at the back, as the real knower. It can never know itself or be known by another. For who can know the knower (*vijñātāram aré kena vijāniyāt*)? This self is also, by its very nature, enduring and

so permanent. For the moment it has a beginning or an end in time, it has become an object; and it demands to be known by what has no beginning or end in time. In short, it is only when we degrade the self and reduce it to a false shadow of itself, that we can disprove its reality. But there is no heroism in killing what is already dead.

It may now be said that in our fervour for purifying the notion of the self, we have, for all practical purposes, effaced it out of existence. The mental states, the historical or growing individual, and even the ego "I" can form no part of the supposed real self. What then is left of it? An entity without any *content* whatsoever is as good as nothing. Neither does it have a *form*. In fact, the self *minus its objectivity* is formless, contentless, and without being of any kind that we can think or imagine. We cannot significantly talk about it, much less seek to know it.

This kind of argument would be true on the assumption that *all reality* must have objectivity; or what is the same thing, reality is synonymous with objectivity. When therefore we take away all content from real being, the latter is reduced to nought. But is the assumption correct? If reality is synonymous with objectivity, we need to ask, objectivity to *what*? Can one object be objective to another object? Can objectivity in the end stand by itself? Is not objectivity as such essentially relative to what goes beyond it or a self? But if that is so, what is the status of the latter, and what

is its essential nature? We have already pointed to an intuition of the self as what is diametrically opposed in nature to all mere objects. It is only objects that can have content or character. The self can have none. *That constitutes its very essential nature.* It is the more truly itself, because it has no content. It is our wrong expectations, and the criteria based upon those expectations, that are at the bottom of our wrong estimation of reality. The self has neither a surface nor a depth, which naturally belong only to objects. We must therefore reverse our expectations, and seek the fulfilment of the notion of the self in that pure subjectivity, which we can neither deny nor know in the objective attitude. The self most assuredly *is*, because at no time can we deny our own existence. No-one can ever say, I am not. This is not only a formal or verbal matter. We have an *intuition*, though somewhat mixed, of the self as what is opposed to the not-self. This self, further, cannot be momentary; for the momentary belongs to the realm of the not-self. The self can neither begin in time nor can it cease to exist. Only objects can do so. Thus the reality of the self as intelligent, permanent, and without content of any kind cannot be doubted.

The self is not only real, but it is *pre-eminently real*. We shall go farther and say that it is *the only reality*. This brings us to a consideration of the relation of the self and the not-self. This relation is one of absolute opposition. Two things are op-

posed to each other, when they cannot reside in the same locus or co-exist in the same ground. Nothing for instance can be both light and darkness. Similarly, nothing can be both self and not-self. But in an ordinary opposition, the two terms have at least one thing in common,—they have both reality. They can therefore exist independently of each other. When however two terms are *absolutely opposed,* they can have nothing in common, not even reality. It is an opposition that in the end turns out to be no opposition at all. For there are no two real terms.

It may be said here that the self and the not-self are not absolutely opposed in this sense. For have they not both reality in their own way? Are they not objects of two distinct intuitions? Neither of these intuitions can be denied. Let it be so. But even so, these two intuitions need not be intuitions of real being. In order that they should be such intuitions, they must satisfy a criterion,—the reality of the object of one intuition must not be, *by its very nature,* incompatible with the reality of the object of the other. Both objects must at least be capable of co-existing in the same cosmos. But is that possible here? For if the self and the not-self are *both real,* the self would have to be understood as an object side by side with the not-self. It would thus form an element of a manifold. It would cease to be self. Once we have treated the self and the not-self as sharing in a common reality, we have degraded the self to the status of the not-

self. The conclusion is inevitable that even being or reality cannot be common to them both, and that therefore they are in absolute opposition in our sense of the term. Both cannot be equally real, or real in the same sense of the term. The sense in which the one is real, the other is illusory, and vice-versa. We have to choose between these two senses of reality, for we cannot accommodate both these senses in any conception of ultimate reality.

We may seek a way out, like Hegelians, by regarding a complete division of the self and the not-self as artificial. After all, we have no experience of a pure subject not related to any object, nor do we have an experience of a pure object not related to a subject. All our experience is subject-object. Ultimate reality can only be conceived in terms of this fundamental dualism and this fundamental unity of all experience.

This argument however does not take note of the fundamental difference in the *import* of our intuitions of reality. We do not know objects only. We also know the self which cannot be treated as an object of any kind. It is this difference in our intuitions that poses the problem of the nature of ultimate reality,—is it of the nature of the self or of the nature of the not-self? It cannot be of the nature of *both*, or as something neutral between them. When it is so conceived, or conceived as implying *both* an object and a subject, the whole thus constituted has necessarily the determinate-

ness of its objective content. Any experience of an object is itself object of another order. It can be literally known. It is experience of some definite content, however inclusive.

Knowledge or awareness, taken by itself, has no determination of any kind. But once an object is supplied to it, the whole thus constituted is undoubtedly objective also. To call such an experience *total* is really a travesty of meaning. Objectivity goes with limitedness and finitude. If there is any infinite reality, or a *whole* outside of which there is literally nothing, it cannot be found in any object, and therefore by implication it cannot be found in any experience of objects or of an inclusive object. It is really a contradiction in terms to call something an object and at the same time a whole outside of which there is nothing. In short, we have not gone beyond the original duality which posed a problem. We have not included both the self and the not-self in a higher unity. We have simply relapsed into the category of the not-self, and taken no note of the reality of the self. The reality of the self simply cannot be included in a greater whole. It is a whole by itself, or it is nothing at all. A greater whole, inclusive of the self as an element, is just not-self.

This brings us back to the question of the choice,—which of the two forms of reality should we choose as *ultimate?* Let us suppose that it is the physical world or the not-self that is real, for the reality of the not-self is admitted by all. In

that case, the self will not be real. It will be just a shadow or an appearance of the not-self. But a shadow or an appearance, although it may be unreal in itself, must at least *appear*. Unfortunately for this argument, the self does not appear. Only objects can appear; and the self is no object in its true essential nature. And then can the not-self exist in itself and by itself? Anything that is real must so exist. But the not-self, which stands for all objects, is something only in relation to the self. All objects are *to me*. The not-self thus implies the reality of the very self, which, on our present hypothesis, has not been conceded. The self is supposed to be unreal; and yet its reality is the pre-supposition of the reality of the not-self. The present hypothesis thus falls through. It is self-contradictory. We are left with the second alternative, namely the reality of the self, which involves the non-reality of the not-self.

But is this alternative without fault? It appears that the self too has a necessary reference to the not-self, and therefore implies the reality of the latter. If there is no object, there is no subject or self. I am aware of my self only in contradistinction from some object or other that is given to me. If I perceive nothing and apprehend nothing, I am as good as nothing. In states like deep sleep, no objects are known; and so there is no intelligent activity of any sort, and no awareness of the self, pure or otherwise. If the existence of the self is conceded under such circumstances, it is indistin-

guishable from non-existence. The self therefore, in order to be itself, must have the not-self as opposed to it or as given to it. The reality of a pure intelligent self, without an *other* to it, is unthinkable and impossible. The least that we can say is that the intelligent self posits its own other. It thus becomes concrete.

We cannot agree with this argument for several reasons:

(a) The reality of the self does not *imply* the reality of the not-self. If it implied this reality, there would be contradiction in the very nature of the self. For the nature of the self precludes the reality of an *other* to it. The *other* would reduce the self to an object. The reality of the self is thus necessarily non-dualistic. It is the reality of the *one without a second* (*ekam eva adutiyam*).

(b) It is true that we cannot know the self except in contradistinction from the object given to it. But then is this knowledge really true? Does it not result in the falsification of the nature of the self through false associations or false relations? The self is known as an object of a sort, *while in its own nature it is opposed to all objectivity*. If it could be known as object, the very distinction of the self and the not-self, admitted by all as significant and unerring, would lapse; and we should have only objects all round, without a self to which they could be objects. In fact, the very correlativity of the subject and the object points to an

underlying ground, a higher Self, which itself cannot be correlated, and which therefore has the character of being unrelated and absolute. It is this higher Self that reveals the correlativity.

(c) Absence of any knowledge of the self cannot possibly affect the reality of the self. This reality is in a sense above knowledge and incompatible with it; since all knowledge is of objects only. While therefore all other things demand to be known, and are what they are only as known, the self is what it is, because it cannot be known in the objective attitude, and need not be known at all. It is the pure knower. And who can know the knower?

(d) The state of deep sleep proves the existence of the self unquestionably. During wakefulness, it may be a question whether there is a permanent (*kûṭastha*) and intelligent self apart from the momentary *I*. There is no question about the reality of this self so far as the state of deep sleep is concerned. When we wake up, we make statements about the state of deep sleep which are never contradicted or falsified later by contrary evidence. We say, "we knew nothing in sleep", "we slept well and blissfully', etc. These statements, relating to the state of deep sleep, could not be intelligibly made, if all intelligence had ceased in sleep or if the intelligent self did not then exist. In the absence of all mental activity and the ego that is naturally tied up with this activity, it can only be our transcendent self, which is of the nature of pure intelligence

called *sākṣi,* that really exists in sleep. The reality of this self is thus beyond doubt. As in sleep, so in wakefulness. It reveals both these states, and yet is beyond them. It exists as a pure objectless intelligence. When objects are empirically known, as in wakefulness, the self reveals their knowledge, and through this knowledge it reveals the objects. When objects are not empirically known, as in sleep, it may be said to reveal the ignorance of all those objects. It is a pure revelation which never begins and never ends, which is independent of all objects, and which never ceases to reveal,—it reveals either knowledge of objects or their ignorance. This is so, as long as the primal ignorance or the ignorance of ultimate reality persists. When that ignorance is removed, the Self reveals nothing objective. It remains an uncovered Self-revelation (*unāvṛta-chaitanya*).

We conclude that the Self alone is real; that the Self does not tolerate the reality of the not-self; that all objects which constitute the category of the not-self are only an appearance *to* the Self and *of* the Self, illusory in character; and lastly that the Self is of the nature of pure intelligence, objectless, permanent, immediate, and one without a second. It is what we should understand by the reality of the spirit. The Spirit is literally transcendent, and at the same time self-revealing. No mere object can be such.

We have so far tried to bring out the real implications of our *use* of the term "I" and of our *in-*

tuition of the self whatever it is. It has brought us perilously near to the conception of an over-soul or the conception of the Absolute Spirit, the object of religious consciousness. Still we cannot claim to know the latter. The self still appears as an individual to us; and although the individual symbolises a greater reality beyond it, the symbol is not quite detached from what it symbolises. Our knowledge of the self as individual is mixed up with that which is not individual, but universal. We need to know that reality to which the individual points, and with which it is, in essential nature, identical. That will be the highest and the last level of knowledge, or knowledge of absolute truth. For here the use of symbolic language terminates. What we know is literally inexpressible and unspeakable. It is only when we communicate the knowledge of it that symbols become necessary. Meaning here gives place to truth. Meaning is finite and limited, truth is not.

CHAPTER VIII

Our Knowledge of Truth

We have so far criticised certain forms of knowledge, and found that each form leads to a higher form above it. We have in this way gone through the different levels of knowledge called physical, logical, metaphysical, religious and spiritual. Finally we come to truth. We came to the realization in religious consciousness that there was what might be called the over-soul. But we lacked explicit knowledge of it. The first stage in that knowledge is the examination of the nature of the individual soul. This nature we still found to contain a certain contradiction. The individual *I* could be literally spoken and meant; and yet it was object of no kind. This contradiction could only be removed through the knowledge of that reality which was behind and beyond the *I*, and which could not therefore be literally spoken or meant. This reality thus represents the highest level of truth. We shall call it the Absolute.

The question now arises, how should we know the Absolute Spirit? We know *It* dimly in religious consciousness. We know It as the over-soul as against the soul. It is a person to us, and the fittest object of love. God is the pre-eminent reality in every way,—in power, in knowledge, and in presence. He is present in all things, and constitutes

their very inner reality and substance. He contains within Himself all time and all space,—being Himself timeless, space-less, infinite. But notwithstanding all these great attributes, which we appear to apprehend in religious consciousness, something still attaches to Him that makes it difficult for us to *know Him*. We address Him as *Thou*. He is somehow external to us, and in a kind of external relation to us, although not wholly so. We feel His presence everywhere, and yet cannot quite grasp Him or comprehend Him. He is so infinitely greater than ourselves that to try to know Him appears sacrilege. We seem compelled to remain content with our ignorance. In fact, if we could really know Him, He would for that very reason become less than His real self. He would become an object, and so something *finite*. This would contradict the religious consciousness. For the object of religious consciousness, although conceived as object of some kind, and addressed as *Thou*, overflows all the limitations of objectivity. It is the infinite object, if the phrase be permitted. It is never merely *this*, but the pervading spirit in *this-ness*, and going beyond it. It is nothing if it is not limitless, formless and infinite. The moment we attach any kind of limitation to it, either in respect of external objects or in respect of our own self, we undermine the religious consciousness. We can never separate it out from anything whatsoever. It is by its very nature pervasive and expansive. Verily, it is the self of all things, their real inner being. It is a

thou that seems to take up and to absorb not only all objects of the external world, but our very own self. It leaves out nothing. It thus becomes the whole or the Absolute. This spiritual reality of the Over-soul, at the level of the religious consciousness, has only one nominal limitation; and it is this limitation that stands in the way of our explicit knowledge of it. It is the limitation implied in the form of address "thou". Generalising this idea of the *objectivity of God* or of the Highest Spirit, we may denote that spirit by the neutral term "That," meaning the Great, i.e., Brahman. We have thus two forms of spiritual reality,—the one denoted by the term "That" or *tat;* and the other denoted by the term "I" (*aham*) or "thou" (*tvam*), meaning the individual. Neither suffices to give us the truth, on account of a certain contradiction inherent in it.

The question remains, how should we *know* the Absolute Spirit or Brahman, the object of religious consciousness? Those who have no such question must stay where they are, namely at the level of the religious consciousness. But they cannot rule out the question or find fault with those who have the question. Theirs is a limited world. They have put a limitation upon what they want to ask. They are afraid. Could their love survive the higher knowledge? They seek the joys of love, and are afraid of knowledge. They are content to remain individuals, seeking the consolations of divine communion. Knowledge might upset all this, destroy all the idols of their life both divine and

human, and create unthought-of crises in their lives. Anyway they are loth to press for knowledge; and they persuade themselves that it is not humanly attainable. But the question of all questions, namely the knowledge of the Absolute Spirit, is there for all religious-minded people, whether they pursue it further or not. No one need be blind to the question, which arises through a certain inadequacy of the religious experience.

How shall we answer the question? In conformity with the truth of all religious consciousness, we have to depend once again upon the revealed word or the scriptural testimony. It is the revealed word or *ṣrûti* that says there is God; it is the same ṣrûti that initiates us into religious experience or the love of God; and it is the same ṣrûti that ought to be able to resolve all our ultimate questions in this connection, and enable us to get the desired knowledge. If we are left to our unaided efforts and to our empirical methods of knowledge, neither God can be a *reality* for us, nor can the knowledge of God or of Brahman, *"tat"*, be a *problem* to us. If it is a problem, which it naturally is for the religious consciousness, it is once again the revealed word that must indicate the solution. If it does not, our problem is bound to remain unresolved. *Ṣrûti* alone can come to our aid, and initiate the knowledge.

Ṣrûti tells us what is the essential nature of Brahman (*svarûpa-lakṣaṇa*) and what is Its non-essential nature. It tells us that the essential nature

of Brahman or the Absolute Spirit, "*tat*", is *satyam* (truth), *jñānam* (pure intelligence), *anantam* (infinitude); *sat, çit, ananda* (blissfulness); *shûdha* (pure), *budha* (intelligent), *mukta* (free) *svabhāva*, etc. It tells us that the non-essential or the relational nature (*taṭastha-lakṣana*) of Brahman is that It is the cause of the world. The world does not form part of the nature of Brahman, nor need it be there at all. If it is there, the cause is Brahman and nothing else. But all this knowledge of Brahman which is conveyed through various different statements, both positive and negative, is still negative in character; for no term that describes Brahman to us is *literally applicable* to Brahman. All terms have their meaning in certain entities that can be known, and that are therefore empirical in character. No term can mean what is essentially non-empirical and in a sense unknowable. Brahman has just this kind of reality. It is truly a metaphysical or super-sensible reality. All terms descriptive of Brahman have therefore to be understood negatively. If Brahman is described as *satyam* or truth, this is to be understood negatively as "different from the unreal and the illusory". We have no positive knowledge of truth, while we have positive knowledge of the illusory. We merely deny this illusory character of Brahman. Similarly, we have positive knowledge of non-intelligent substances or *jada*, but not positive knowledge of pure intelligence or *çit*. Brahman is therefore to be understood as "different from *jada*." In the same way,

all the positive attributes of Brahman, that describe the essential nature of Brahman to us, have to be understood negatively. No word can directly mean anything that constitutes the very nature or svarûpa of Brahman. But then all these statements about Brahman cannot amount to a positive knowledge of Brahman. They only convey negative knowledge, which we, through error, take to be quite positive. If that is so, there is a demand for a more adequate or positive knowledge of Brahman. Such knowledge alone can be real knowledge. We then know not only what a thing is not, but what it positively is. The knowledge of Brahman or the Truth must be at least as satisfying as the knowledge of a nut on the open palm at the empirical level.

Once again the only method of direct knowledge of Brahman refers us to certain statements of ṣrûti. These statements, because of their great import, are called the *mahāvākyās* or the great statements. They are central to the truth revealed by the scripture. All other statements are subsidiary to them, and are accordingly called *avāntar-vakyās* or secondary statements. These latter enable us to remove different kinds of doubt about the nature of Brahman. But when we have removed all those doubts and grasped completely the essential nature of Brahman, we are still at the level of negative knowledge only. We know what Brahman is not, not what Brahman positively and assuredly is. This positive knowledge of Brahman

is only possible through the *mahāvākyās*. All the mahāvākyās, altogether four in number, have the same import. The most typical of them is the statement "thou art that" (*tat-tvam-āsi*). Here *tat* (that) stands for the great being, the Absolute Spirit, that is the object of the religious consciousness. *Tvam* (thou) stands for the individual self. The whole statement therefore means that the Absolute Spirit or Brahman is your own very Self. In other words, there is an *essential identity* of the real Self of the individual called *ātman* and the Absolute Spirit called *paramātman* or Brahman.

The statement is significant, because the two terms in it, "thou" and "that," do not ordinarily signify the same entity. They are not synonymous terms. By *that* we mean the infinitely great, the distant, the creator of the world, etc. By *thou* we mean the self of the individual, the embodied spirit, that passes through different states and through the vicissitudes of life, that suffers and enjoys, that is always immediate and never distant, etc. The statement may be non-tautologous, but is it true? It is evident that if we take the terms in it in their literal meaning, the statement cannot be true and cannot lead to any kind of knowledge. As a matter of fact, it is patently untrue and makes no sense. How can the infinitely great be identical with the small or the finite? It is also evident that neither of the terms can be an attribute of the other or add anything to the meaning of the other, as is the case in statements of empirical import. An

attribute must not contradict the essential nature of that of which it is the attribute. That which is small cannot be an attribute of that which is infinitely great, and so on. The statement can only make sense and thus impart knowledge, when we *interpret* the terms, retain part of their meaning and reject the other part, and thus establish an identity between the two terms which was originally not available. This interpretation is technically called *jehad-ajehad-laksanā*. We retain that part of the meaning of *that*, which is consonant with, and which in fact demands, part of the meaning of *thou*, and vice-versa. The most important part of the meaning of *thou*, which invests it with special significance in the present context, is its immediacy (*aparoksatva*), its non-objectivity and its self-evidence (*sva-prakāsatva*). The Absolute is identical with the Self, because the Self alone has that immediacy and that self-evidence without which the Absolute cannot realize its own nature as the infinitely great. The Absolute, if it is not of the nature of the Self, and so one with it, will be some kind of object, and so necessarily finite or limited. The Self alone, being no kind of object, can be the Infinite. All the other positive attributes of Brahman get their meaning in the "*ātman*" or the Self.

All genuine knowledge is communicable; and it can be communicated only through certain statements. The *mahāvākyās* are statements that communicate the highest kind of knowledge or know-

ledge of the truth. This knowledge has a character all its own. It is not knowledge of any relations. Ordinary empirical statements give us knowledge of relations only. Something is related to something else. That is all that we know. We never know what a thing is *in-itself* and without any relations. We never know the truth as such, which is knowledge of reality as it is in-itself. The *mahāvākyās* communicate nothing if they do not communicate the knowledge of the *thing itself* or the reality itself. The statement "That art thou" does not suggest any relation between *that* and *thou.* Taken literally, they are as distinct as cow and horse. Taken as identical in meaning or as synonymous, they can form no part of a significant statement. The statement "that art thou" is significant and conveys knowledge, only in so far as we reject both *that* and *thou,* and grasp their *fundamental identity.* This identity is no relation. There is no such thing as a relation of identity. Two things cannot be identical; and if there is only one thing, there is no relation, and so no relation of identity either. The identity of *that* and *thou* then cannot be a relation. It can only be an undifferentiated and indivisible truth (*akhand-artha*), from which both *that* and *thou* are absent. This identity is the only significance of the mahāvākyās. The highest knowledge then is knowledge by identity, not by difference. The difference is sublated or cancelled in the identity. The statement of the identity has

the form of a statement, but not the characteristic meaning thereof. The meaning goes beyond both *that* and *thou*, and contains no terms. It is a higher unity without terms and without relations (*eka-rasa*). The statement therefore does not mean anything that thought can think. Thought does not here refer one term to another, and relate them from the outside. That would always be an inadequate, if not also untrue, form of knowledge. Thought, in the present case, merely symbolises a truth which cannot be literally expressed. There is communication, but no literal meaning,—only symbolic meaning, or meaning above all meaning. The statement is made the vehicle of a new species of knowledge in which a self-identical nature or *svarūp* is grasped without any relations whatsoever. It is the only genuine kind of knowledge *above relations*. What we know is the Absolute; and the Absolute is known as the very Self.

The Self is always self-effulgent or *sva-prakāsa*. In this sense, it is never absent from sight or direct intuitive awareness. It is this awareness itself. It is never fully covered by ignorance. We are therefore never completely ignorant of it. It is the light that reveals the darkness of ignorance itself, and shines in darkness. "*It is the light that shone in the darkness, and the darkness knew it not.*" It is *the first thing known*, before anything else can be known. All other things *follow* the knowledge of the Self. But not-withstanding this knowledge, which is part of the

nature of the Self as self-revealing, and which we express when we say without any thought "I am", we still have ignorance of the true or the complete nature of the Self. We do not know its absolute purity, its freedom from all bondage, its non-duality, its blissfulness, etc. We do not know the fundamental and the original identity of the Self *with Brahman.* This is our ignorance. It is removed by the mahāvākya, *tat-tvam-āsi* (that art thou), and the subsequent logical thinking which removes all doubts in the matter and confirms the truth to us. The ignorance of the Self in this respect is comparable to the case of the person, who sees the moon and the stars in the sky and still asks, where is the moon? An elder replies, the pre-dominant light which you see is the light of the moon. Here the initial knowledge of the person asking the question was in a way quite complete; and yet ignorance was also present. What the elder did was not to *add* to his knowledge, but merely to remove his ignorance by directing his attention to a pre-eminent reality within the horizon of his original knowledge. That is exactly what happens to the person who seeks to know Brahman. He knows his Self or ātman for what it is. And yet he is ignorant. When he is told that his Self is verily Brahman, nothing is really added to his knowledge. For notwithstanding certain misconceptions on his part, the Self really shines in his firmament for what it really is, namely as Brahman. Only his self-imposed ignorance is removed,

and with it his misconceptions. Now he knows. But he only knows what was already and for ever known. A slight shift in thought was all that was needed. The real thing was there, all-resplendent and all too true, facing him in all its nakedness, and yet he knew it not. The fault was in him, in his perverted mentality. Ṣrûti removes the fault, the fault of ignorance, and directs thought to its proper object which is never really hidden. Thus it conveys the knowledge in a simple way indeed. How simple!, only those who have eyes to see can realize.

Brahman may be the truth, and the truth is known. But all knowledge has a necessary reference to reality. This reality can only be understood as the *object of knowledge;* and where the knowledge is true, the object determines the knowledge of it. But is Brahman any object at all? If it is, will it be the infinitely great or the Absolute? Is it not self-contradictory to say that we know the Absolute as object? But once again, if we do not know the Absolute as object, can we be said to know It at all? If reality is not the object of its knowledge, how else can it be related to knowledge?

Let us here state our old position, and see if any modifications are necessary to it. Brahman, we said, is of the nature of the *ātman* or the intelligent Self. The Self is self-revealing and self-effulgent or *sva-prakāsa.* The *sva-prakāsa* can never be an object. No object is ever self-reveal-

ing. It requires to be revealed by *another,* or the intelligent Self. It is necessarily unintelligent or *jada.* The Self is not *jada.* It cannot therefore be known in the objective attitude. And yet somehow it must be known. Our ignorance about it cannot be removed without knowledge of it. What is this knowledge?

To put it simply, we might say, the Self is object only in a partial or a special sense. It differs from all other objects. All other objects lack a self-nature or *svarūpa* which they can reveal in knowledge. Knowledge *gives them* a form (*rūpa*), and makes them what they are. Instead therefore of the objects determining knowledge, it is knowledge that determines the objects. The objects are not simply known or revealed in knowledge. They *emerge* as constructs of knowledge. They are nothing *in themselves,* and are not therefore literally known. Knowledge has done something to them. It has given them their very form, in virtue of which they become knowable. This is the ordinary sense of objectivity, exemplified by all judgmental knowledge. The Self lacks objectivity in this sense. But it does not lack objectivity in the sense that it is self-revealing to the knowledge of it. There can be no error here. For the thing that is self-revealing can only reveal itself for what it is. This is the essential character of all truth. Reality must borrow nothing from the knowledge of it. It is not knowledge that must determine reality, but just the reverse. It is only then that knowledge be-

comes true. The Self alone is truly known, if anything is truly known at all. And since the Self is by its very nature without limitations of any kind that are inherent in all objects, and so infinite, it can only reveal itself as infinite, and impose its infinite form, if we may be permitted to say so, upon the knowledge of it. Thus the Self is indeed object. But unlike all empirical objects, it is free from the limitations of objectivity. It makes its knowledge conform to it, not the reverse. In this sense, it is the only *true object.*

Empirical objects not only require an appropriate mental modification or *vritti* for their knowledge, but they also require to be revealed or made manifest. But for this revealing aspect of knowledge, the objects would remain in the eternal darkness of ignorance, and would be as good as nothing at all. Not so the Self. The Self too would naturally require an appropriate mental modification or *vritti* for its emergent knowledge. But it does not require to be revealed or manifested by this knowledge. It has self-manifestation. Thought cannot manifest it. It manifests itself in thought. It is the light of thought itself, when thought reveals empirical objects. How can thought reveal it? It is the only light there is. It is not comparable to the dead physical light, which requires intelligence to manifest it. What can reveal it, if it does not reveal itself? Need we bring a lamp in order to see the sun? We do not require a light in order to see another light, even at the empirical

level. How can we require the reflected and the limited light of our human intelligence, the mind, to reveal the very sun of all light and all intelligence?

The Self is object in so far as it determines the subject in knowledge. This kind of objectivity is unexceptionable. It is part of the meaning of true knowledge. It is called *vritti-vyāpti* or the appropriate mental modification. But neither is the Self a construct of knowledge, nor is it revealed by knowledge. This is called *phala-vyapti,* or the *emergence of an object* in knowledge. It is this emergent objectivity that is objectionable. *Vritti-vyāpti* does nothing to the object. It merely means a psychosis or mental form (*vritti*) appropriate to the object. This must be there, whether the object is empirical or non-empirical. All thought implies it; and without thought or *buddhi,* there can be no knowledge. The only objectivity therefore that pertains to Brahman is the objectivity that is immanent in any kind of intellectual seeing.

But is thought competent to know the Absolute? Thought must evidently depend, in knowledge, upon some kind of intuition; for it is not itself intuitive. There are sensible intuitions. But there appears to be no super-sensible intuition of reality comparable to them. This may be so, if we take the super-sensible reality to be something outside of us, very much like Kant's thing-in-itself. But it has been our contention that there is only one thing that is super-sensible, and that one thing

is not finite or limited. We have not to look outside of us, in order to intuit it or to find it. It reveals itself, in all its real infinitude, within us, as our very own Self, the knower in all that we ever know. Those who do not recognise this ever-present and super-sensible reality within us have to be content with the knowledge of physical reality only. With them we can have no argument. They have closed the door for any kind of higher knowledge. They can have no problem about any other kind of reality called metaphysical reality. Once however we recognise that there is a genuine intuition of the super-sensible reality of the self, certain problems naturally arise, which can only be solved on their own particular ground, a direct intuitive awareness of reality. Here we have a new kind of knowledge, and problems germane to that knowledge. We simply cannot help pressing forward for a complete metaphysical knowledge which will dissolve all our doubts and questions, which is never possible in the empirical sphere,—where, the more we know, the more we have the sense of our ignorance. Empirical knowledge has no end or limit; for, in the last analysis, it is all imagination, *no direct awareness of truth.* We call it hypothetical knowledge. Metaphysical knowledge is nothing, if it is not self-certifying and self-evident, after we have removed, through analysis, the obstructions (*pritibandha*) due to ignorance, error and want of discrimination.

We know the Self with the aid of thought.

But thought here has no constructive function. It merely criticises and analyses. At the same time, it is not groping in the dark. Nor can it boast of any form of autonomy. It has to conform to the nature of reality. It is fully informed from the very beginning as to the true nature of reality. Thought is conscious that this reality is not amenable to any form of objectification. It is therefore its enlightened business not only not to *judge* this reality, but also to *negate* every judgment made about it in ignorance and through error. We are always prone to judge the Self as having some of those qualities which really belong to the physical body, or to the activities of the mind, particularly thought, or to the changing states and fortunes of the individual. It is the attribution of those qualities that renders the Self an object to us. It is this erroneous objectification of the Self that requires to be negated through discriminative thinking. The Self is therefore said to be known through negation only (*neti, neti,*—not this, not this). In this way, thought purifies the intuition of the Self of all false accretions and associations due to its own unconscious, but perverse habits of thinking. Thought sits on judgment over itself, and cancels itself. Negation is thus the first step in the self-conscious knowledge of the super-sensible. For, here, we can only proceed from error to truth. No error, no self-conscious realization of truth.

Mere negation, however, will not do. We should not only know what the Self is not, but

we should also know what it positively is. Positively, it is the infinitely great, the unrelated, the absolute, etc. It is Brahman. This indivisible identity of the Self (*ātman*) and Brahman is to be grasped by thought. It is the only positive knowledge of super-sensible reality. Thought grasps this identity by putting aside all ideas, all conceptual differences, and getting at the literal truth. Since the truth which it knows in this way is infinite, thought itself assumes the form of infinity. This is called *Brahma-ākāra-vritti* or the modification appropriate to Brahman. Thought then ceases to be discursive. It ceases to be thought in the ordinary sense. It becomes itself intuitive, as reality is intuitive. It is reality that shines in it, or we might say, informs thought. Similarly, thought is made whole, as reality is whole. Thought went out to know reality. But it did not return as thought. In the fire of knowledge, it was transmuted into reality, having lost all its limitations which infect it at the empirical level. As the Ṣrûti puts it, the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman (*Brahma-vit Brahma-eva bhavati*).

Differences belong to the domain of idea only. When all ideas lapse, and thought faces naked reality, it coalesces with reality. There is nothing to keep them separate. Thought becomes a species of seeing; and having seen, it becomes silent. It simply cannot express what it sees. Truth is both indubitable and inexpressible. Doubt and expression belong to thought at the discursive level. In

the most immediate form of knowledge, unmediated by the concept, these have no place. Here is the very ideal of knowledge. There is no possible stand-point from which this knowledge could be criticised. Criticism has come to its very limits. It has given place to complacent, but enlightened, acceptance. Criticism must end in silence.

One more question remains: If Ultimate Reality is without differences of any kind, does not the very knowledge of this reality bring in a difference,—there is reality *and* there is the knowledge of reality? Can we be said really to know a reality that is without any differences, when to know it itself implies a difference? Knowledge therefore cannot be related to an undifferenced reality, in the purity of its indivisible nature. Knowledge is itself a relation, and that must infect the purity of the reality that it knows. In other words, truth cannot be known, if by truth we mean knowledge of reality in all its wholeness and purity. The very fact of knowledge contradicts it.

We must now admit that knowledge is a certain limitation, which we impose upon reality. But the important thing is not the fact of this limitation, which is after all objective or empirical in character, and so illusory. Knowledge of Brahman therefore must not only cancel other appearances of duality and of difference, but it must also cancel itself as the last modification of maya or ignorance. What is important is that the knowledge of truth does not grasp a differentiated reality, or Brahman

as related to knowledge. Knowledge does not form part of the reality that is known, which remains without difference of any kind and so essentially pure. But if that is so, truth has no limitations of any kind. What we know is pure truth, without any mixture of error. It is knowledge of non-dualistic reality that Brahman is. This is the Truth.

CHAPTER IX

Conclusion

We have reviewed certain forms of knowledge. What are the conclusions that we may be said to have arrived at? (1) No form of knowledge is to be rejected as wholly erroneous. Every form of knowledge has its use in its own particular sphere. There is truth in it. Only this truth is mixed with error. All that we have to do is to separate truth from error, and not to build up an imaginary sphere of truth.

(2) There is an immanent logic in the lowest common-sense level of knowledge. If we begin to analyse this knowledge, it will display its own inadequacy on the one hand, and a higher level of truth on the other. The latter in its turn gives place to a still higher level, and so on till we reach the crowning phase of knowledge, which is knowledge of the Absolute Truth. This Truth is thus present in all forms of knowledge, and we can start from anywhere in order to get at it.

(3) Every form of knowledge is initiated through a particular method of knowledge. It has its own problems, which are tackled through a special kind of logic appropriate to them. There is not one kind of logic which will solve all our problems. Our reasoning has to be adapted to the

nature of the problem itself. It is one kind of reasoning that is demanded in science, and quite a different kind of reasoning that is demanded in the final knowledge of truth. The questions are different. They arise at different levels, with different sets of facts posing those questions. There can therefore be no fixity or rigidity in the form of our reasoning. We want to get at a satisfactory solution of our problems, and reasoning is only an instrument for the same. The instrument must be suited for its varying purposes.

(4) The criterion of truth is equally a changing thing. The criterion which we demand for scientific knowledge is verifiability in sensible experience. The criterion which we demand for a system of ideas is coherence. But the criterion for Absolute Truth can only be self-evidence of reality. This self-evidence is not to be confused with the self-evidence of a process of deductive reasoning, or with the clarity of any idea. It is the self-evidence implied in the nature of reality itself, that reveals itself for what it is. Absolute Reality, according to this view, has the essential nature of always revealing itself, and revealing itself for what It really is (*yatsākṣāt-aparokṣāt-Brahma*).

These are important conclusions for any epistemology. But as we have said earlier, the ideal of knowledge is only fulfilled in the knowledge of the Truth. This Truth is absolute, and without any admixture of error. No problem of knowledge is then left over; and there is no ignorance of the na-

ture of reality itself. We rise gradually through error to greater and greater truth, till we reach that truth which dissolves all doubts, and un-ties the knot of the heart, that keeps us as individuals working for worldly ends through ignorance of the truth.

The truth saves us from every kind of bondage that binds us to the goods of this world or of any possible world after death. For we now know the whole empirical realm of existence (which comprises the joys of heaven) as a creation of ignorance and of error. The Truth is ever present and ever perfect. It is not a distant truth. For we are the Truth. This truth is at the same time the greatest value. It is the summum bonum of life. It is bliss itself. All other goods are only partial manifestations of the bliss of the Self. When therefore we know the Self, all our desires are satisfied. No desire is left unfulfilled. The world with all its joys appears, in comparison, as an arena of pain and sorrow. It was a bad dream, a nightmare, from which we have woke up to life eternal. There is no desire to go back to it, except perhaps to wake up the slumbering souls, and to help those, that are painfully conscious of the evil of all mere empirical existence, but who are unable to free themselves from bondage by their unaided efforts.

The man who knows the Truth lives the Truth and is the Truth. He sees the same Self everywhere, not that which we see. And because he sees the Self and nothing but the Self, his whole life is transformed. He is the personification of the Eter-

nal in bodily life. He radiates joy and peace everywhere; and when he acts, he acts without any inner tensions, without any passion, and without any egoistic self-interest. He acts not out of any inner compulsion, but with a free mind and a natural desire to bless and to save. He is the ocean of Grace,—the veritable God in human form.

Satyam eva jayaté

